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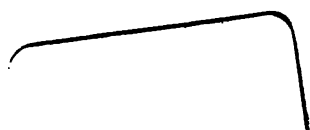
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**THE**

**BRIGANTINE.**



THE  
BRIGANTINE.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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# THE BRIGANTINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIGH PRIEST OF SHOODAGON.

THERE was a great bustle in Rangoon. The excitement following the march of the army and the grand festivals had passed off, but now the crestfallen warriors had returned utterly defeated, and the little fleet with a like failure. The Boa had sped up the Irrawaddy with a few attendants and in great haste, leaving the two viceroys who had accompanied him to bring on the warriors at a slower pace. The division under Munris Maywoon, the powerful rival of Aungua, swarmed into the city of Rangoon, where their entrance caused great commotion. Like a nest of wasps disturbed by a rough intruder, they filled the city with murmurings of disappointment and rage. All was bustle and confusion. The streets were crowded with the warriors, and on the river

hundreds of canoes were moored to convey them up the Irrawaddy. The other grand division of the army had passed up the Salween, commanded by the chief lieutenant of the viceroy.

The war boats had returned to their various stations on the rivers, but the troops were not yet disbanded. Passing through the crowded streets towards the great pagoda, we still find little groups of natives assembled in earnest conversation here and there along the road. Many persons are passing up the pagoda steps, and great numbers on the road leading to the little kyoung, so lately the scene of the smugglers' depredations.

The Seredan's house is unaltered, and we enter the same silk-hung apartment, wherein we first became acquainted with him and his brother, the old merchant, Monchaboo. There are three occupants now in the room ; two of whom we recognise at once. One is the tall Seredan, clad in his yellow robes, pacing the apartment with his unsandalled feet and uncovered head. Seated on a skin-covered couch is Munris Maywoon, dressed richly, and with the chains of his rank hanging over his breast. He is intent on smoking a large hookah, from which two long stems proceed, one terminating in the mouth of Munris,

the other in the mouth of the third personage, also a Burman of rank — a viceroy, for he has the same number of chains as Munris. This viceroy is rather tall for his country, but still under the height of the high priest, whom he resembles very much in features, but lacks the keen penetrating glance of Symoo. This Burman is also seated on the couch with his brother viceroy. The Seredan is speaking, and frequently pauses before his hearers, accompanying his words with a movement of his hands in rather an excited manner. In truth, on the Seredan's face could be read an inward feeling of sadness, mingled with an evident tinge of mortification, which all his efforts to appear calm cannot entirely subdue.

“I have heard you, good brother Maulong,” said he, turning as he spoke to the strange personage we have noticed; “I have heard you, brother, and you, Lord Munris, and with truth I am sad at this great repulse, and to hear you tell of the stranger's treachery. Once I should have been surprised, but now I am not; for I have somewhat to tell you, which I doubt not you have heard slightly rumoured, but the details are in a great measure secret.”

“You mean the strange event at the kyoung,

good brother Symoo," remarked the stranger, whom the Seredan has addressed as brother.

"I do," replied the priest, "and if you will listen, I will unfold that which will raise your hot anger. Listen, then, high lords of Burmah. You have heard of Koonah, a priest, who for sins I expelled from our holy brotherhood, and who has since plotted against our god Guadama. You have heard that the brethren in the little kyoung were found gagged and bound, and an open vault disclosed. That vault contained treasure belonging to Guadama, and beneath our holy temple, down far in the bowels of the earth, a chest contained some sacred hairs from the head of our god. The priests tell me they were surprised by the stranger's armed men, headed by the yile Koonah. He it was who disclosed the secret of the vault, and he himself led them to the treasure. Beholding all this desecration, the priests were helpless, and they saw the midnight robbers convey from the vaults nearly twenty treasure chests ! Well may you be surprised ; but listen, while I yet unfold deeper sins. Shocked with this intelligence, I hastened into the vaults, and there I saw, not only the treasures gone but our god insulted ; the banners strewn by polluted hands around, and the sacred

chest, containing the hairs of Guadama rudely forced open ! It was so, proud lords ! Guadama was thus insulted and despised by those sinful strangers, and by Koonah !”

The Seredan paused, but continued his excited paces, while the Viceroys, astounded at this revelation, spoke not for some time. At length Maulong said—

“And what has become of that degraded priest, good brother ?”

“He is in my power,” replied Symoo. “For some days after this event I knew not where he was, but he daringly ventured in Rangoon, and thus was captured. He is now at your disposal. He is no longer a priest, and therefore beyond my power : but listen yet further, Maulong, for I have yet more to unveil, and something that will exalt you in our Boa’s favour.”

“Say on, good Symoo, say on,” exclaimed his hearers, in a breath.

“It is this,” continued the high priest. “Koonah in his bold boastings of how he has injured me, made these confessions. One is, that our brother Monchaboo was murdered and his dwelling robbed by the strange captain and his men. It is so, brother, and,

moreover, at Koonah's instigation and under his guidance."

Again Symoo paused, and Maulong exclaimed, "What shall be done to this assassin, good Munris? All the tortures we can invent must he suffer. The low-born robber! to lift his hand against the highest family in Burmah; to rob and murder my brother Monchaboo, and to desecrate your temple, brother Symoo! Let me away, and hurl him to torture and to death!

"Stay, stay, good brother," exclaimed the high priest, checking Maulong, who would have hurried away to carry out the intention his wounded pride rather than wounded heart prompted. Stay, Maulong, and listen yet further. "Koonah has declared that the stranger ship will soon be off the coast of Arracan, to commit some depredations there."

"Let us away, good Maulong," now broke in Munris; "this is good news for our Boa!"

"And we will remove this reptile from our path," responded Maulong, who now rose, and bidding an affectionate adieu to his brother, the Seredan, he left the apartment in a hurried manner. Munris would have followed, but a sign from the high priest restrained him. Glancing around to see that the viceroy

had gone, the Seredan drew near—"I have important news for you, my son" said he. "This same Koonah overheard you conversing with the mountain chief in the grounds yonder, and of this he informed the stranger captain. The youth, Aungua, has become leagued with him, and thus, learning the purport of your consultation, he has gone towards the pass of the Yumadong, and the captain has promised to be off the coast of Arracan, for what purpose perchance you may divine, my son. Such did Koonah tell me to show how completely he had been plotting to the injury of me and my children, but blessed be Guadama, you may yet foil these plots, regain Domea, thy promised wife, and then fulfil your sacred promise.

"Thanks! thanks! holy father," replied Munris, rising and speaking with great warmth; "my promise shall be fulfilled even as soon as I regain my home. Ah! ah! good Seredan, that boy is yet in my power—leaguering with the stranger; ah! the Boa shall know of this. Farewell, holy father, I go to repay this priest for his villany, and to gain the object of my passion. Gentle Domea shall be mine."

With these words the viceroy left, in a respectful manner, retiring from the presence of the high priest;



but when he had passed from the apartment, he assumed the proud bearing of his rank, and muttered half aloud, "Yes, she shall be mine in spite of all. Lovers and friends shall sink in this contest. My passion shall conquer, and when the fair flower has lost its scent and beauty I will trample it in the dust, and then shall proud Domea know that Munris Maywoon's passion, when gratified, can change into a deadly hate."

The viceroy, joined by his attendants, passed with a stately air down the wide road leading to the town, and pleased with the humility and reverence shown to him by the cringing people, he entered the fort.

Passing the numerous groups of warriors about, the Maywoon walked towards a large shed, or rude house, round which were several men in the Arracan dress, their hair braided in plaits according to their native custom. These warriors appeared to keep apart from the Burmese, on whom they looked with no friendly eye. Entering the house, Munris found it tenanted by many of these warriors, and he spied their respective leaders, to whom he advanced and drew one aside. After a long, and apparently earnest conversation, the Maywoon exclaimed in a louder tone, enough to be heard by all, "Take to boat at

once, and away to your homes. The wives and little ones are weary at your long absence. Lose no time."

With this remark, Munris Maywoon again left the dwelling, and made his way to a large, strong-built house, before which the flag of Burmah waved from a lofty pole. Around this house great numbers of Burmese warriors were assembled, some speaking in angry tones. As Munris advanced they fell back, and he entered the house. It was one large hall, also crowded with armed men. At the furthest end was a cleared space, around a high seat, on which sat Maulong Maywoon, and before him, held by two powerful warriors, was the priest Koonah. Munris advanced towards the seat, and was seen by Maulong, who cried, "Welcome, good Munris, come you here, and judge this assassin."

Munris seated himself, and scanned the prisoner. In spite of his forlorn condition, although a prisoner, and surrounded by armed men full of rage, and although almost naked, still Koonah quailed not. Standing unabashed before his proud judges, he met their glances with a look of bold defiance. He could not hope to escape, but he cared not for that. He had told the Seredan of the mischief done, and his

revenge was gratified in seeing the grief it wrought in him. What more keen and galling than to insult the Seredan's loved idol, but Koonah's revenge was not yet satisfied.

Munris beheld the careless, determined look of the prisoner, and this made him the more enraged. Turning to the Maywoon at his side, he asked, "Has he confessed aught, good Maulong?"

"Confessed, Munris! Nay, the villain has sealed his tongue. He appears utterly indifferent to all my threats of torture."

"Vile wretch!" said Munris, turning fiercely to the priest, "know you not that we can have thee torn limb from limb, or can set thee free! Confess, I say, confess thy villainies!"

A confused murmur from the armed men greeted this speech of their chief, and all eyes were fixed on Koonah. As soon as the noise subsided he spoke—

"I will confess, great lords of Burmah!"

A shout of delight from the warriors around checked his further speech, but when this ceased, at the angry motion of the viceroys, Koonah continued—

"Great lords, I will confess, but not through fear! I laugh at your threats. I defy your tortures. You

may kill this body, but my soul will enter another, and I will prey upon you and yours for ever. As a raging wolf, I will gnaw you ! as a deadly serpent, sting you ! In every form I come, I will follow and torment you ! I will never——”

A blow from one of the guards stopped this wild outpouring of hatred, and loud cries of “Confess, confess !” silenced the proud but enraged prisoner, who, at the next opportunity, continued—

“Listen, then, warriors of Burmah, whilst I confess.”

The priest now turned to the armed men around, and spoke with great excitement, whilst they listened eagerly to his words :

“Warriors,” he cried, “you have heard how the old merchant of Kemmendine was found bathed in his blood. You have heard how the holy temple of Shoodagon was desecrated. Who did those deeds ? I : it was I—but not alone. I was but the simple tool. Trace back the broad river to its course, trace the high tree to its root ; and I here confess that they who caused the murder of old Monchaboo and the defiling of the temple, are the high and holy Seredan of Shoodagon and the proud Munris, my judge !”

More he would have said, but the wild cries of the warriors drowned his voice; and had not the May-woons been present, the prisoner would have been literally hewn in pieces. Swords flashed and spears were waved, but the viceroys commanded silence.

"Let us hear no more from this wretch, good Maulong," said Munris, with tones of deep vexation. "Why listen to the ravings of this madman?"

"Nay, good Munris, hear more what he will say, and then away with him to death!"

Turning to the prisoner, Maulong said, "How mean you, villain? explain yourself."

"I mean, great lord," replied Koonah, "that had not Lord Munris set his desires on the old merchant's child, Monchaboo would not have planned to confine her brave young lover, and the Seredan would not have sent me to league with the stranger captain and guide him to Kemmendine; nor should I have sent him to rob old Monchaboo's dwelling. Had not the holy Seredan punished me for sins of his teaching, I should never have dreamt of touching Guadama's wealth. But they are the causes of this! If murderers and desecraters there be, then are——"

"Maulong, Maulong!" exclaimed the enraged

Munris, checking Koonah's speech, and turning to his brother viceroy, "Will you listen to our holy Seredan, the father of Burmah, the priest of Guadama, thus reviled by yon lying imp of evil? Shall the lords of Burmah be thus insulted and degraded, when it is in your power to punish him as he deserves?"

The maddened viceroy sat down. This was not his province, therefore Maulong could only be urged, not controlled.

"Nay, Munris," he replied, "it is far from me to listen thus calmly. I have only allowed him to entangle himself in the web, for now the people will gladly put him to death, and not draw back because he once belonged to the holy priesthood." This was uttered in a tone sufficient to reach the ears of the viceroy alone.

Maulong then rose, and extending his hand towards the prisoner, would have spoken, but Koonah seeing his end near, checked the Maywoon by saying—

"Lord Maulong, I would say but a few words before I die."

The prisoner uttered this in a gentle voice, and the viceroy replied—"Say on, then; you have but little time."

"Lord Munris," said the prisoner, with great clearness of voice, "you are a skilful hunter, but there is a deer on the heights of Yumadong, and another and a braver hunter than you is there. Hasten, if you would see the deer ; but speed as fast as you may, you are foiled."

Koonah had uttered this before any could think of checking him, and in truth none but Munris knew its meaning. He then drew himself erect with a bold, defiant air, and was at once surrounded by the warriors.

At a few words from the viceroys, the armed men moved out of the house to convey the priest away to the spot where a terrible death by torture awaited him.

Active feet had sped on before to the place where the dead bodies were usually burned, beyond the precincts of the town. Active and willing hands had there reared a funeral pyre on which the condemned priest was to be burned alive, after suffering horrible tortures. The news had spread like wildfire through the city, and when the warriors guarding the victim issued from the fort, loud yells and shouts greeted him.

Wave after wave of people surged up each narrow street. Balconies were crowded with eager and delighted spectators, and soon the mob was joined by

the indispensable car of music, which rolled on in the rear. A spectator from other lands would have fancied the people were rejoicing at some glad news ; but no, their loud shouting was produced by the sight of a condemned felon on his march to death, and by the prospect of torments that await the doomed wretch !

On swept the ever increasing multitude, shouting and raging, and heaving like the stormy sea. What now can save the condemned priest ? What power on earth can pluck him from that yawning gulf ? Hundreds and thousands of armed warriors are there to resist all attempts at rescue, if any would dare it ; but not one in that mighty crowd would have lifted a hand to save the prisoner.

On surged the angry mass, delighted to have an object on which to vent their rage. Soon the scene of punishment was neared. With an unwavering step and an unquailing glance, Koonah walked towards the spot where hundreds of spectators were assembled. With his hands bound behind his back, and spurred on by the spears of his guards, the priest strode on, silent but firm.

The spot is now approached and wild shouts fill the air, when, lo ! a commotion is heard in the rear. Other



cries are faintly heard, as if vainly endeavouring to check the tumult. All eyes are turned in that direction, and now the multitude divides. Right and left the masses give place ; the shouts cease, and up the living avenue of bowing forms the Seredan of Shoodagon, with bare head and naked feet, clad like the humblest priest, walks with a hurried but a stately pace. Without a word, the high priest hastened to the spot where the guards and their prisoner stood watching with eager looks the result of this strange and unlooked-for obstruction. The Seredan advanced to the prisoner, and, still not speaking, he placed his hand on Koonah's shoulder.

That was enough ! Not daring to show their inward disappointment, the guards unbound the priest. Not even the haughty emperor of Burmah would dare gainsay this unspoken command of the Seredan. The foiled multitude looked on ; they saw their victim unbound, and the warriors fall back, leaving the high priest and Koonah standing alone.

Fixing his keen glance on the priest before him, who, amazed at this sudden turn of events, looked confounded and like one in a dream, the Seredan said—

"Koonah, you have sinned deeply! I thought not this of you, my son! but though deserving this awful doom, I could not rest to see you perish thus miserably. Go; you are free! Live henceforth a better life. Seek the favour of Guadama, and if you will, enter his priesthood again. Remember this day, but go far away from hence, where men know not of your sins."

The Seredan ceased, and Koonah, raising his head, looked at his deliverer, but with a glance of deeper hatred. Hate, ingratitude, and a revenge more deadly than ever, were all expressed in that one glance. The Seredan trembled, and Koonah, without uttering a word, sprang towards the spot intended for his execution: the people drew back, not daring to touch him whom the high priest had saved; and the released priest, passing the pyre, disappeared in the adjoining forest.

The high priest, pleased at his timely arrival, but deeply grieved at Koonah's reception of his well-timed aid, slowly retraced his steps to his home. The multitude, bowing in superstitious reverence, dared not express their disappointment, but slowly broke into masses, and dispersed to their various dwellings.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WOUNDED TRAVELLER.

As Loo gazed down from her high position, with spellbound eyes upon the passing mountaineers, and especially upon the motionless form they carried, they disappeared from her sight. Without uttering a word of explanation to her mistress, she desired Domea to return to the grotto, and then lightly ran down the steps, past the old crone, acting as their sentinel, and away in front of the dwelling. On the wide green space the mountaineers had halted, whilst the villagers crowded around. The chief was examining his men, about fifty in number; he is the same we saw at the affray in the pass, but the men are not, although their bundles are part of the rich merchandize they captured. In the centre of the group, and still supported by the men, was the motionless form which had so attracted Loo's attention. Scarcely noticed by the others, the maiden

pressed nearer until she gained a better view of the form, but without actually approaching it. After giving some directions to his officers, the chieftain motioned to the bearers of the body, who raised their load and followed him into the large dwelling.

Loo stayed no longer to see what became of the mountaineers or their burdens, but hastened back to Domea, with a rapid step, and an eye beaming with joy.

The house which the chief entered is, as it has been stated, large. It is but one story, but strong, and light, and elegant withal. It has four large windows in front, with a door in the centre, and the front of the house is bordered by a neat verandah, over which the eaves of the roof project, being supported by slender pillars. Short steps enter this verandah, and lead to the door. A passage runs through the whole length of the house, with apartments on both sides, and in the rear are domestic offices, and behind all the pleasant garden and high grotto we have already seen.

The wide passage or hall was thronged with servants, male and female, and as the wounded

traveller was brought in, the chief, turning to a female, apparently the head of the domestics, said—  
“Here is a charge for you, good Lemy; an arrow wound and bruises from a fall from his horse are all. He has had but a short rest in our mountain nest, so look to him well.” Having said this, the chief turned to one of his followers, “Come with me, Kala, we have much to converse about.” With this he entered one of the rooms, followed by the person thus addressed.

The room was spacious but simple, and the walls crowded with weapons of war and trophies of hunting. A rude lamp hung from the roof over a table, and a couple of couches, well covered with skins, was all the furniture it contained.

Laying aside his weapons and his tiger mask, the chief prepared to smoke a cigar, but still standing; Kala also put off his arms and seated himself. He was a well-made, active man, of youthful appearance.

After a brief silence, during which the chief and his officer prepared their cigars, “Kala,” said the chieftain, “have the canoes in readiness, and as night draws on, let the men get the merchandize

on board, and away with it to the larger craft, and bid the seamen get under sail at once! To-morrow we shall have more down from the 'Nest.' A few more such days and we shall have the Boa's warriors buzzing through our pass!"

"That I doubt not," replied the officer; "it has been a glorious time. Better this than fighting for the Boa!"

"Better, did you say, bold Kala? Ah, I curse the day when our arms failed before that greedy monarch. Patience! Patience! In our mountains we will gather strength and numbers, and when the time comes, the peacock of Burmah shall grovel in the dust. The warriors of Arracan may be conquered but not subdued!" The chief became excited in his manner, and his follower also caught the fire, and responded heartily to his chief.

"Our numbers might be more; but none but well-tried and daring men will join us."

"And those are all we need," replied his commander. "I wonder how brave Keintalee and his two hundred have fared?"

"Some days must pass before we can hear of them," said Kala. "It is a sorry thing to spill good

blood and blunt keen weapons for that haughty monarch of pride."

"Moreover, good Kala, it leaves us now but four hundred men. Enough, though, to keep the pass against all Burmah, but not sufficient to fulfil my plans. The gods be thanked, we are rapidly increasing. Soon I will throw off my mask. For a time must we be content to act the humble mountain villagers here: I, the peaceful lord of this little community, obedient to the Boa, and supplying him with my few men in time of war; but on our own mountains, I am the well-known and the dreaded 'Tiger Mask,' taking tribute from every caravan which winds through our passes. Ah! Kala, they may seek us there if they will. Let our numbers increase, until we can command all the passes better than we do now; until at their head I march down on to the plains and sweep the conquerors into the ocean. Too many of our countrymen are cowards—our king has no heart; but the work shall be done by the 'Tiger Mask!' Until that glorious time arrives our brave band shall increase in wealth and might. The 'Nest' will defy all the cunning of Burmah to find or their strength to take."

After a pause, during which the two smoked vigorously, and appeared exulting inwardly at the bright future: "About this traveller we found wounded," at length said Kala, "what shall be done with him?"

"Ah, you remind me," replied the chief, "that I said I had seen him before. Our canoe met his when we left Rangoon to return. He is the old man from whom we stole our gentle captives; he is aged, and there is nought to fear. Let them meet; it will reconcile our charges to their lot."

"The damsels have been here but a few days, but they seem wearied," observed Kala; "the mistress is extremely sad, but they are brave damsels withal."

"They belong to a brave people," replied the chief; "but I wonder at the grand Maywoon thus chasing the poor thing. Had it not been for the pretext to return to our mountains, I would not have done the task. I like not entrapping the weak. But, good Kala, we have higher interests at stake than these. Here they are safe and treated with honour, and this old traveller will be a comfort to them; only let them be well guarded, Kala."



"They are, and they cannot escape," replied the officer; who continued, "Why not, my chief, inquire of them of this matter; and should they be wronged, then pluck them from the Maywoon's power."

"Nay, nay, Kala: I see them not, because I shall not be so interested. If we thus thwart the Maywoon, what can save us from open war? We must let matters go. If he treat her well, I will not obstruct him. If I see aught unmanly, although as the humble village lord I let them go, yet as the 'Tiger of Yumadong' I will wrench the prey from his grasp. My hand longs to smite a Burman noble. Enough of this. Remember the bales and the canoes to-night. No time must be lost! The struggle will be fierce and must be sustained, but the merchants of Burmah shall supply us with wealth."

While the chief and his officer were thus conversing and planning bold and brave deeds for the future, the wounded traveller, who, from the chief's expression, must be old Momien, was conveyed to another apartment and carefully attended to. The arrow-wound in his side was not of much importance, except from the loss of blood it produced;

but the shock of the falling horse had bruised and so stunned the old pilgrim, without actually breaking any bones, that he recovered his senses but slowly.

Gently attended to by Lemy, the head of the domestics, he soon felt revived, and his first act was to offer up his silent but heartfelt thanks to the Great Ruler of events for his preservation. Collecting his scattered thoughts, Momien recalled the events of the past few days. He endeavoured to raise himself on his elbow, but sank exhausted on the couch whereon he was stretched. He looked around the small but neat apartment; the light was shining through the window; the air, finding its way through the opened Venetian, was fresh and invigorating. This was morning. Save the sounds within, and a slight confusion of tongues without, all was still and peaceful.

The attendant was constantly flitting in and out the apartment, and time passed slowly on.

After being there about an hour, the door opened, and the mountain chief entered. Momien gazed at him as he advanced to his couch. The mountaineer was dressed just as when we first saw him in the Seredan's garden, but Momien did not recognise in

him the leader of the men who attacked the caravan the evening before.

After carefully examining the wound, the chief said to the attendant, "Go, Lemy, when I want anything you shall know."

The woman hereupon left the room.

Looking down on the traveller before him the chief said, "Have you seen my face before now, old man?"

Momien tried to remember, but failed, and made answer, "Nay, I cannot tell."

"Do you remember passing a war canoe on the Irrawaddy, some week or more ago?" asked the mountaineer.

The circumstance flashed across the old pilgrim's mind, and now he recollected the connexion of the canoe with Domea's absence.

"Ah, I see you do," continued the chief, without waiting for a reply; "and I suppose you were on the track of your lost charges. Am I right?"

"You are," replied Momien, wondering what was coming.

"They are here, within this dwelling," said the chief.

The effect on Momien was tremendous. He tried

to spring from his couch, but in vain ; he fell back almost faint.

“Calm yourself, old man,” continued his host. “No harm has happened to them. You shall see them, and even now they know you are here ; but remember,” and here the chief’s voice deepened into a stern tone—“remember you are in my power. Think not of escaping. Remain quiet, and all honour and respect shall be paid, as your age and their sex demand ; but you will be closely watched. I hear your charges coming. Forget not my caution.”

The chief left the room, and Momien, confused at this extraordinary and yet happy state of events, had not time to compose himself before the door was flung open, and without a cry, Domea entered, and fell on her knees at his side.

With the fondness of a father the old man smoothed down her jet-black hair, whilst Domea sobbed for joy. Loo stood a little back, trembling with excitement, but with her face suffused with smiles, while Momien looked at her and at Domea in turns. The sudden burst of joy over, Domea lifted up her head, but held tightly his hand, as if in fear of being separated.

"Oh, Momien," said she, "how good is the Lord ! I had thought all were gone, but you have been spared. Oh, tell me of dear Aungua ! Where is he ? how is he ?

"Dear child," said Momien, collecting himself, "let us first thank God for this meeting, for out of darkness He hath brought light. The events which I thought had shattered all my plans and laid me helpless, I now see was but His way to show forth a deeper love. Let us thank Him, my child."

Domea still knelt at his side. Loo even bent her knees as Momien, with clasped hands, lifted up his voice in thanksgiving. Events however perplexing, troubles however great, only led him the oftener to the throne of his God in prayer.

Domea, now rising from her knees, seated herself on the edge of the couch of the old pilgrim.

"Now tell me," said she, "my more than father, if you have heard aught of dear Aungua."

"Of him, dear child, I know nothing to guide us. When I left you on that evil day to find old Luong, at Rangoon, I discovered only that the high Munris had branded him as a deserter from his post. Such reports will make way, my child, but we must heed

them not." Momien dared not tell her all the evil reports, but continued—"On my return to Kemmendine, I was artfully drawn away into the village, and when I reached our home, my child, you were gone. The shock was more than I could bear, Domea. It bereft me of all sense and power ; but, thanks be to the Lord, I speedily recovered, and gained all the intelligence from Paopa, my servant. He could only tell me that Arracanese warriors had done the deed, and left him bound. What was to be done? I soon determined to go in quest of you, my child. On the following morning, at daybreak, I was ready for my journey. Leaving Paopa at the cottage, lest the boy should return, I took what valuables I could carry on my person, not forgetting the blessed book, which I have here."

Momien here showed Domea his bible, slung in a case securely at his waist, and thus was preserved. "My only plan was to trace the course of the Arracan party, and for this purpose I hired a swift canoe, and after journeying day and night upon your track, I left the river and procured a fleet horse. After journeying some distance alone, I fell in with a large and wealthy caravan, escorted by several of the Boa's warriors.

For security in passing the mountains, I joined this caravan. They were travelling to the very pass to which I traced your party. Toiling up the mountain sides occupied many hours, and it was fast approaching night when we reached the pass. What followed then, my child, I can scarcely describe. We were suddenly checked by a flight of arrows, and a great body of armed men issued from the forest and violently attacked our guard. An arrow pierced the horse I rode, and rendered unmanageable from the pain, the animal dashed through the pass. Another arrow struck me in my side ; still I maintained my seat ; but the wounded steed dashed into the forest, and striking against something, it fell, hurling me to the ground. From that time, I lost all recollection. Whither I was carried I know not ; but when reason returned I was in a strange scene. Torches were glaring around, and fell on the forms of great numbers of men, all armed. Standing over me was one, a tall and powerful man, with his head covered by a strange mask—a tiger skin. Perhaps the excitement was too much, for I again became insensible ; and the next time I became fully conscious, I found myself here. This, my child, is a brief account of my journey, and

happy and thankful indeed am I that the Lord has so ordered events and brought us together.

"It has indeed rejoiced me, good father, for my heart was failing me; but oh! I am so sad, not knowing what has become of dear Aungua. Is there no clue! no trace!"

"My child," said Momien, "let us not doubt that love which has wrought so wonderfully for us hitherto. In a human sense, Aungua has greater chances of being in safety than even we have. I am convinced he is not far from Rangoon, if indeed out of it."

"Oh! Momien, what mean you? Why do you think this?" cried Domea, eagerly.

"Perhaps I am too rash in my judgment, my daughter," replied the old man, "but I feel assured the priests of Shoodagon have been the means of his absence. If I am right he is safe. They may have confined him, but harm him they dare not, for it is against their religion."

"Oh! father, if this be so I shall be more cheerful; but how can I be contented with such a cloud of uncertainty hanging over dear Aungua?"

Momien returned, "Let us have faith. Looking above for help, we must try every means in our



power to get away. Tell me, now, Domea, how you have fared ?”

“I have but little to tell, good Momien,” said she ;  
“Paopa told you of that night when poor Loo and myself were taken away. All that night we could distinguish nothing. We heard the rush of water and the splashing of oars ; but we were enveloped in mantles. For some days we were carried by water, but not allowed to see around us except at lonely parts of the river. We were in a large war canoe with many warriors ; but were treated with great kindness, and the master of this house was there as the chief. From the canoe we were placed on horses—only Loo and myself, the warriors leading them. I cannot describe to you, good Momien, the weary journey. We passed lonely places and went through wild forests. At length we reached a pass in the mountains, the same, perhaps, at which you were wounded, and there we were brought down on to the plain, and so to this village. Since then we have been well watched and not allowed to roam beyond the stockade. In weeping, and watching, and waiting we have wearily passed the time ; but now, my father, you have come to take us away !”

"Ah! mistress," broke in Loo, "Master Momien must get well first, and even then I fear we cannot escape."

"Loo is right, my child," said Momien, sadly; "under your gentle nursing and with Heaven's blessing, I feel I shall soon be well and strong again; but the chief of this place was here just before you entered, and warned me against attempting to escape. We must be patient, my child. When I am strong again we must contrive something; but more can be done by gentle means. This chief appears good-hearted, if my skill in reading characters has not deceived me." In this manner the old pilgrim and his charge, with the maid, Loo, continued conversing.

Lemy, the attendant, at her chief's direction, allowed Domea to be Momien's constant nurse.

The day passed by. Attending on her old teacher and adopted father Domea became more cheerful; but the worm of anxiety still gnawed at her heart. Few have felt the ardent love which mutually existed between her and Aungua. To be each other's helpmeet on the journey to the better land, and in doing their heavenly Master's will, was their hearts' desire.

Faithful and self-denying as love always must be, constant and loving with an unspeakable fervency, Domea clung to her Christian lover. Aungua loved her not less fondly or intensely ; but combined with love he was a protector. She clung to him and he was her support. Such a love as this, difficult to describe, may perhaps be deemed as a near approach to idolatry.

It may be asked—With Domea's great power over Aungua, why could she not have induced him to leave the army, and so have saved her heart many pangs ?

Let it be remembered that in Burmah every man must of necessity be a warrior, and in case of desertion or lack of bravery, all the poor warrior's family or relatives would be ruthlessly put to the sword. Here, then, was the cause. Domea, though her heart felt many pangs, knew the awful result, that to wish Aungua to leave the army was to place him in danger of his life and all connected with him.

Whilst we are thus lingering, the village has become shrouded in night. The various families have retired within their respective homes, but a slight bustle

attracts our attention. Men are carrying the bales of merchandize under the guidance of Kala. Following this party, discerning only in the gloom their dark forms, we pass through the postern leading to the river. There we find several canoes drawn up alongside the bank, and into these the bales are rapidly placed. The canoes are manned, Kala seating himself in one, and then they push off and paddle down the river, whilst the men on shore return silently to the village.

For about twenty miles or more, the canoes continued to skim rapidly down the river, the rowers aided by light sails. The river is winding, and at its mouth are several islands, some of great size. Changing their course, the canoes left the islands on their left, and following the bending of the land for a few miles, now used only sails. They soon reached a broad channel between the mainland and an island, and here were several large two-masted native vessels. This channel leads into an expansive bay, and thence to the open Bay of Bengal.

The canoes here ran alongside the larger vessels, and the bales were hoisted on board. Kala delivered the message of his chief, and seeing the vessels get-

ting under weigh, he stepped into his canoe, and, followed by the others, sailed leisurely back to the village.

This strange midnight journey on the river occupied several hours, whilst all others in the village were buried in silent slumber.

## CHAPTER III.

## “THE BEACON LIGHT.”

Two days after the events detailed in the preceding chapter, the sun was just lighting up the rocks and tree-tops on the mountain pass, so lately the scene of the assaulted caravan. The air was cold and chilly, and a solemn stillness reigned in that lofty and noble region. As the light increased and a rich stream bathed the sublime scene, sharp ringing sounds of a horse's hoofs could be heard ascending from the Burmese side, and in a brief space of time a solitary traveller, mounted on a panting steed, came slowly around the huge rock. It was a picturesque sight. The horse, small but remarkably strong and fleet, had a high saddle and rich saddle-cloth of tiger skin, ornamented with many gay tassels; the headpiece was also decorated with tassels. The rider, seated high on the saddle, was dressed in Burmese fashion, a coloured putso and tartan scarf covering his body. His naked feet were resting

in large shoe stirrups. On his head was a turban. His weapons consisted of a long spear in his right hand, a small round shield slung at his left side, where also hung a curved sword, but not of Burmese make.

What bold rider is this, coming alone into these grand but dangerous mountain scenes? what mission can induce him, singlehanded, thus to journey through the night? As if in answer to these inquiries, the rider advances along the pass, and coming into the open light, we recognise that manly face and fearless eye—that slight but strong and active frame—it is Aungua!

Alone he has ventured to these regions. Undaunted by wild beasts or fierce brigands, and unchecked by the gloom of night, he has pressed on his active steed, and now at early dawn we find him in the pass of the Yumadong.

It will be remembered that Domea was stolen away on the evening of the day when Aungua and the Seredan met in the dungeon. Three nights from this Aungua was released by Captain Grasper, and being provided by him with money, clothing, and arms, he stepped a free man on the shore of the Irrawaddy.

Losing no time, he hurried to Momien's house, and there found Paopa true to his post. From him he gleaned the truth of what he had heard, and being

fully informed by Grasper of the village to which Domea was conveyed, he started on the track. Before the inhabitants of Kemmendine were astir on the following day, Aungua, in a light canoe, Momien's own, was gliding swiftly up the river. At a convenient distance where he was unknown, he landed, and procured a strong and fleet steed and arms, but he still retained the handsome, keen-edged sword, Grasper's present.

Stopping only to give his horse wind, Aungua pushed on with a rapid pace, swimming rivers and passing over wide tracts of desolate land, but, still alone, he pressed on. One half of the journey accomplished, he left his jaded horse, and procuring another, again pursued his lonely course. Marauders saw with surprise the armed but single traveller pass them at a gallop. Wild animals turned savagely as they were disturbed by the clattering hoofs of the swift steed; but meeting nothing beyond this, Aungua reached the pass where we find him.

Glancing around rapidly at the yawning gulf on his left, and at the massive rock and forest on his right, he urged on his steed, panting and foaming with the wearisome climb up the pass.

Plunging into the forest ahead, he followed the



mountain track. This led to the plain below, and passing to the north of a lofty and almost isolated mountain spur, led to a village some ten miles from the place where Domea was confined, and nearly twenty miles from the sea-coast, a little above the bay noticed in the last chapter.

After a weary ride of about three hours, Aungua reached the first-mentioned village, between which and the mountain village lay a dense wood. Here he rested his exhausted horse for hours, adopting ingenious plans to recruit the hardy animal's taxed strength ; then impatient at delay, mounted once more, and turned towards the object of his journey. Passing through the forest, he emerged on the plain whereon the village cattle were feeding, and here he spied several shepherds. Alighting from his horse, he walked slowly to a small shepherd's hut, whilst his horse followed, now and then cropping the rich grass.

Seeing but a jaded traveller and his steed, which Aungua cunningly kept between him and the village, the shepherds freely entered into conversation. Plying his questions in a skilful manner, he elicited much information respecting the interior arrangements of the village, but at once saw the magnitude of the task before him. A few passing remarks


told him the course of the river and the position of the bay. As evening was drawing in, Aungua left the hut, the shepherds being remarkably pleased with the interesting traveller. Apparently riding towards the forest whence he came, Aungua gradually altered his direction, and when beyond sight, urged his steed to a brisk pace towards the sea, which he soon beheld in the distance.

As he advanced nearer to the sea, winding his way among rocks and clumps of shrubs, he heard the sound of the wild waters washing the shores of the bay. On still went Aungua, and turning his horse towards a rising ground he came to a sudden halt, in admiration of the scene before him. At his feet, washing the very base of the ledge of rock on which he stood, were the foaming waters. A long beach, broken by many rivers, and white with the spray, extended right hand and left. The land, rocky and rugged in parts, with many sandy coves, threw out its two encircling arms around the ocean. Many shoals and sandbanks begirt the beach. Rocks and islands dotted the bay, some forming a barrier at its mouth. The waters, raised into tossing waves, rolled in playful anger on the sands, from which they were receding ; or tossed their spray over the distant rocks,

and laved the many islands studding the bay. Beyond all, to the west, the open sea gleamed in the rays of the declining sun—the rich rays of which, darting from a canopy of golden clouds, sparkled from crest to crest of the heaving waves—here, gilding parts in a blaze of splendour, and there, steeping nooks in deepest shade. The cool breeze blowing off the land fanned the mane of Aungua's steed, and lifted his own black hair. As if entranced, rider and horse alike gazed out on that fairy scene, and listened to the sweet music of the waves.

But Aungua came not here now to admire. He ever did that, and whilst admiring, adored that beneficent God who has left so many gems of truth and gleams of beauty to remind us of what we have lost, and to point us to what may yet be ours, if we will but seek them in His own appointed way.

Still seated on his steed, Aungua, shading his eyes from the fierce rays of the sun, scanned the horizon of sea at the opening of the bay; in vain, not a sail was to be seen far or near. Again, and more minutely, he gazed around him. From what the shepherds had told him, combined with the explanation which Grasper had given of this bay, Aungua could easily determine his position. Full eighteen



miles to the south-east of the spot where he stood, the river which washed the mountain village poured out its waters. From thence the coast extends for ten miles or more in a north-westerly direction, studded with immense islands, and the channel teeming with rocks and shoals. Here the land bends abruptly to the east, and once more to the north, with a large island lying in the bend. Hence the open bay is seen, and a large river from far inland rushes into it behind the island.

From this river the direction is north-westerly for a few miles, until another river is met, crossing which we reach the neck of land on which Aungua rested his weary horse. This neck of land, rocky and having a lofty wooded hill on its southern end, is about four miles in width at the beach. Its north side is also washed by a river, and thus the land, broken into many headlands or points by large rivers, having low banks crowded with mangola trees, trends north-westerly to the mouth of the bay, its south end being formed by two vast islands, begirt by a host of lesser ones and sandbanks. The distance of Aungua from the outermost island to the south of the bay was about nineteen miles, and from the northern one about thirteen miles; the

distance between the two sentinels of the bay being over fifteen miles.

Much of this information Aungua knew, but he now scanned the whole horizon, and finding no other spot so suitable, he turned towards the lofty hill, a little more than a mile in his rear. The day was fast waning, and a gloom was setting over the bay, when Aungua, much fatigued, and still accompanied by his horse, now limping with his long journey, found his way to the hill-top. This was an arduous task, there being no beaten path ; but he toiled up, leading his steed, which was well accustomed to climbing hills. The hill itself was but three hundred feet above the land level, but of great size. Near its summit Aungua found a level space, covered with rich grass. In front, a ridge of rocks and thick mountain shrubs formed a safe barrier, and over the tree-tops the broad ocean might be seen to the west, with the picturesque bay below. The space was large, and in the rear the hill shot up a higher ridge, its base being girdled with foliage, overhanging the secluded spot.

To this sheltered place Aungua led his horse, which at once commenced cropping the grass, whilst his master unburdened him of saddle-gear and bridle.

He was provided with provisions, and a long line, with which he tethered the animal. The darkness was growing apace, but soon Aungua had made a large fire of wood. The flames crackled and blazed, casting a ruddy glare all around, and by its light he spread the saddle-cloth in a nook of the overhanging rock, and then producing some food, he refreshed his weary frame. The night deepened, and clouds obscured the bright stars which now and then peered through a break in the dark canopy, shedding their sweet rays upon the bay.

How strange and solitary a scene! The dry logs burning rapidly, Aungua heaping on more fuel to the huge beacon-fire, and the flames dancing in the air, brought out the projecting portions of the rock, and the jutting branches of the trees, whilst the shadowy parts, as if retreating in dismay, were buried in deeper shade. The horse, well tired after its rapid and long journey, lay stretched on the ground. The blazing fire was reflected from the bright sword, leaning against the rock, and brought out all the surrounding objects with a strange and startling clearness. Spear, and sword, and shield, with the horse trappings, all brought to view. For miles over the bay could that beacon fire be seen, but not from

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the land. Aungua had chosen his position with foresight. The high rock in the rear screened him from the land.

Beyond the crackling of the wood and the hissing of the flames, little noise could be heard. A faint sound of splashing waters was borne upward now and then; but soon more ominous sounds reached Aungua's ear: the wild howlings of jackals, mingled with the growls and roars of more dangerous denizens of the forest. Such sounds he was well accustomed to. Stretched at full length on his horse-cloth, Aungua kept watch for some considerable time, listening for any sounds that might be wafted in from seaward; but none were heard. Piling up more wood and committing himself to his heavenly Father, he at length lay down in sleep with his weapons near at hand.

Rapidly the hours fled by; the huge fire faded away; the sounds ceased on the plains below, and Aungua, starting to his feet, found his horse already feeding on the rich grass. Stepping to the natural battlement of his lofty home, he looked down upon the bay beneath. It was a glorious scene. The morning light was rapidly bringing its beauties into full view. A cool tone of grey dawn pervaded sea and land. Far over rocks, and islets, and sandbanks,



for a distance of more than twenty miles, did Aungua now gaze. The island sentinel of the bay away to the south-west faded from view in the horizon, whilst beyond the island guarding the north-west end he saw the blue sea.

Other work was to be done. He knew not when the brigantine would appear off the bay ; but now a weighty task is before him. More and exact information must be obtained respecting the village. To attain this object, Aungua prepared to leave his watch-tower. Thanksgiving for past providence, and prayer for future guidance, formed the first act of the Christian. He well knew that every stratagem of his would be fruitless without the strong arm of God to aid him. Saddling his steed, and piling up fresh wood ready to be kindled, he led his horse down the steep and dangerous path on to the plain. Stopping to drink of a spring welling out at the hill base, and giving his horse water, he next rode to the river and enjoyed a bath.

This done, Aungua mounted and away towards the direction of the plain, where he saw the shepherds of the previous day ; but suddenly, as if struck by a fresh idea, he changed his course and rode slowly in the direction of the large village, where he first



arrived. The scenery was grand, but rough. Fine clusters of trees, high grown grass, lofty hills, and thick woods, with many winding streams and broad expanses of water, filled up the picture, which was backed by the noble mountains of Yumadong.

Scarcely noticing these beauties, Aungua allowed his horse to fall into a gentle pace. How to gain more minute information respecting the inmates of the chieftain's house now puzzled him. Among those inmates he felt assured were Domea and Loo. To visit the shepherds again might excite suspicion, therefore to the village he determined to go; there perhaps he might gain some clue to the whereabouts of Momien. Rousing himself from his meditation, Aungua now increased his horse's speed.

At the village he rested his animal. Of the mountain village he could gain no information, except that it was occupied by hunters and shepherds, and that few persons were allowed to trespass there. The people bore the character of being peaceful and industrious. A few well-directed inquiries elicited the news of the caravan being attacked in the pass. Two of the company were lost; one a warrior, who fell into the ravine, and the other a traveller, whose horse dashed away, but

whom they saw not again. More than this, Aungua could not learn. Whether the traveller was Momien or not, he could only surmise.

Before leaving the village, Aungua procured a bow and arrow, and on his road back to the beacon-hill he searched the forest in quest of game. This was abundant, but the hunt was fraught with danger. Wild beasts roamed those seldom frequented wilds; but Aungua was of a nature to enjoy the pleasures, not unmixed with danger, of a sportsman's life. After some time he succeeded in lodging an arrow and then another in the body of a young deer of the red species. Away shot the wounded and lamed deer, and away in pursuit dashed the fleet steed. The deer, unable to escape, turned and stood at bay with its formidable antlers lowered for the charge. Accustomed to this, Aungua checked his steed, and a third arrow from the strong bow brought the prey to the ground. Lifting it on his horse, he now wended his way out of the wood slowly, and when near the borders alighted and kindled a fire.

Here Aungua remained for hours. Some of his prize he had cooked and devoured long since, and part was thrown over his steed. The shadows of the forest were now deepening more and more. The

birds had ceased their songs and whistling sounds, and distant growls told him the wild denizens of the forest were issuing from their lairs. Still Aungua remained silent and deep in thought. The sun went down, and evening threw its gloom over the scene, whilst night came rapidly stealing over the eastern hills. The fire burned, and yet Aungua sat there, as if heedless of dangers. Not so, however. Not a growl of an advancing beast, not a crackling of a branch, but his quick ears detected. He watched the night deepening, and when his horse pawed the ground and neighed as if in fear, then Aungua rose, and like one under a new impulse, sprang on the back of his horse, which, glad to be away from that place of peril, bounded off with its double load ; but not towards the bay.

Getting clear of the forest, Aungua checked the animal's speed, and turned his head towards the mountain village. He might now advance to its very stockade without being perceived, so dark was the night ; and in truth this appeared to be his intention. The broad river brought him to a halt ; but riding down the bank for several yards, to the spot where it lowered to the water's edge, he walked his horse gently into the flood, and when in deep water the animal swam nobly for the other shore.

Here Aungua dismounted and led the animal carefully and with little noise over the soft ground, and got close to the stockade. Listening for a few moments, he searched for a convenient place where the branch of a tree hung over the palisade. Aungua now tethered his steed, and placing his spear and bow against the wooden wall, slung his shield and sword over his back. He also put off his tartan scarf, leaving nothing but the putso around his loins, and into this he thrust an arrow. He then led the horse close in to the stockade under the overhanging branch, and mounting the animal, stood upright on its back. Again listening for any sounds, he grasped the strong branch, and with an active spring was on the stockade top, and then dropped silently inside. Lying on the ground, he listened for several minutes. Between the trees he saw numerous lights gleaming and heard sounds of persons talking. Rising from the ground he cautiously glided from tree to tree, and approached the first house. His dark form could not be distinguished from the tree-trunks around, and Aungua wisely kept out of the little streams of light proceeding from the hut windows.

From dwelling to dwelling he glided rapidly, endeavouring to find the centre of the village. He had

often to stop and lie close on the ground, or hide his form behind a tree as a villager passed in the dark. The open spaces he shunned, as thereon he detected armed men keeping watch. The barking of dogs he heard ; but moving with great caution he managed to evade them. In which house was Domea confined ? He naturally thought she would be towards the centre of the village, where he understood were to be found the larger dwellings. Now he crept up to each hut, and silently listened for the sound of voices in his native tongue. Hut after hut was passed, but still no clue—and these visits were attended with great danger. Angry growls of dogs as if in doubt often sounded at a little distance from him. Another house Aungua approached, and hearing voices proceeding from the window he crept under the wall and listened. Apparently there were several persons, and talking in the Arracan dialect. Aungua understood this, but heard nothing of interest, and was about moving off when a remark caught his ear.

“What will the chief do, good Kala, with his damsel captives ?” said a voice within.

Another voice replied, “Perhaps give them to the noble when he comes.”

"Why not keep them himself: such prizes are seldom gained?"

"Nay," was the answer, "our chief has matters of greater importance, and cares not to trifle; in truth, although they now occupy his own dwelling he sees them not."

"Strange," remarked another, chiming in; "said you not, Kala, that the wounded stranger knows the maidens?"

The sound of some one advancing prevented Aungua hearing the reply, and he glided off, now more certain in his proceedings. He reached the chief's dwelling, which he distinguished from its size, looming out in the darkness. Here the chances of detection increased; but nothing daunted, Aungua got over the palisade and within the garden. Lights were in some windows whilst others were darkened. Listening to each, he soon caught the sounds of singing from one of the apartments. Pressing close to the house in its deep shade he heard, with suppressed breath and an anxious heart, a voice in his own language! The words of a well-known hymn, sung by a well-known voice, came sweetly to the listener's ear. The singer's voice was faint, but Aungua could not mistake it. It was a great struggle to

refrain from speaking, but this would have shattered all his plans. The hymn continued, and Aungua rapidly plucked a leaf from a shrub, and in the dark with his arrow-point on it he scratched his name. He would have listened longer in hopes of hearing the voice of her he loved and sought. Momien was the singer he knew, but as the hymn ceased a deep growl near him made Aungua start. Quick as thought he thrust the arrow through the leaf, and dropped the winged missive through the bars of the Venetian. The growl was followed by a fierce bark, and as Aungua rapidly shifted the shield to his left arm and grasped his sword, a large dog sprang at him baying savagely. Aungua saw the dark form, and with a swift thrust of his sword pierced the animal in the breast; the dog fell dead.

The alarm had been given, and as he with a bound cleared the low palisade, he heard sounds of rushing footsteps, and glancing over his shoulder, he saw the glare of torches in his rear. Waiting for no more, he dashed off between the trees. Having the advantage of his pursuers, he threaded his way in the dark straight for the stockade. The confusion increased. Shouts of men and yells of dogs seemed resounding on all sides. Right ahead, on one of the green spaces

over which was his direct course, he now saw torch-lights, and perceived figures of men. They could not be evaded, and so, grasping his sword and shield with firmer hold, Aungua bounded over the clearing. He was seen ! and with a triumphant shout the men ran to intercept him. Aungua verged to the left and increased his speed. One of the men drew ahead, having a long spear in his hand. Keeping his eye on this enemy, Aungua suddenly sheered round, and ran directly towards him, throwing his shield before his breast and lowering his sword. Surprised at this bold ruse, the man levelled his spear, and lunged heavily at him : but Aungua nimbly checked himself, and receiving the blow sideways on his shield, he stretched out his foot, the spear glanced off, and the warrior fell heavily on his face.

Before he could regain his feet, Aungua was off again, darting right away from his place of entrance, but only for a few yards as he turned abruptly, once more thus misleading his pursuers, but not all ; for as he neared the stockade, he heard the panting of a dog close on his heels, and the crackling of the dry branches as the animal bounded over the ground. There was the stockade within a few yards, but Aungua saw he had no time to reach it, ere the brute



would be at him. Wheeling around, he dropped on one knee, as the savage wolf-like hound, unable to take a proper spring, plunged heavily upon his shield, with which Aungua defended his face. Before the dog could recover itself, the keen sword entered his bowels, and he fell back writhing in agony. Ere the pursuers could come up, Aungua was over the stockade, and upon his horse.

Shouts mingled with the splash of paddles told him the canoes were manned to cut off his escape. Arranging his weapons and casting away the remains of the deer, he dashed towards the river. In plunged the steed, and as though sniffing the danger, the noble animal breasted the waters and swam across.

Determined not to lose the prey, the villagers darted their light canoes down the river, and their many torches throwing a glare over the stream, showed them the dripping horse with its rider, clambering up the bank. Before they could reach the shore, a loud laugh, followed by a whizzing arrow from Aungua's bow, came from the dark bank ; and as the canoes grounded, they heard the swift pattering of the horse's hoofs sounding less and less distinctly, as they died away in the distance.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ASSASSINATED PRIEST.

SYMCOO SEREDAN walked moodily up and down his favourite promenade, before the temples encircling the base of the mighty Shoodagon. The sun was going down with great glory ; masses of clouds, mountains of crimson and gold, standing back in awe at the departure of the great orb of day. The high trees cast the temple base into shadows, but the golden spire sparkled in the sunbeams. Between the slender trunks, so straight and leafless, of the high palms, might be seen the eastern branch of the Irrawaddy winding, and towards this the high priest threw many glances, and then again at his much loved temple, which rose so grandly above river, plains, houses, and trees. This calm evening might well have thrown a strong tinge of peace and quiet over the soul of Symoo, but within him was a strange tossing of feelings—a wild unrest. Few sounds could be heard to disturb the serenity of the scene ; Rangoon

was again free of warriors, for they had departed some days ago. Priests and civilians had fallen into the usual rounds of duty, but the Seredan was still ill at ease. Tumult reigned within him. With arms folded, and head bent low, he paced slowly over the sacred soil, and as he paced, recalled the principal occurrences of late. What a catalogue was there ! How had he stepped from his habit of unconcern for the world, and rushed into a maze of events. With all this, his heart accused him not ; was not all done with a single eye to the glory of his god ? Truly it was. The rights and wrongs of his acts troubled him not. To him the means mattered not, if the end were good.

Symoo knew not of that sweet and blessed religion which demands that good means only be employed to attain a good end. What then troubled him ? Ah ! had not the holy temple been violated ? Had not his god Guadama been insulted ? Surely this must trouble the heart of Buddha's high priest. But even here, his heart felt a balm. Time might heal the wound. The wealthy Maywoon had promised to enrich Guadama's shrine. These things passed in slow review before Symoo's mind, but still the wild waves within were tossing. Thought after

thought flashed across the mental mirror, but one remained. The Seredan could not shake off the unpleasant feeling produced by the revengeful glance of Koonah. Symoo felt that he had obeyed the dictates of the Damarthal in saving his life, but that glance haunted him. Wherever he went, whatever he did, whether teaching, preaching, or worshipping, that wild, unspeakable look of hatred filled him with discomfort. In vain he strove to drive it from him; and now, as the sun's rays faded from Shoodagon's spire, he felt a corresponding gloom creeping over him. Some invisible and subtle power seemed flooding him with strange thoughts. Again his thoughts changed to other things, and anon, in mind, he beheld the dungeon far beneath his feet. He saw the bold look of his young captive, but more than that, words were ringing in his ears with a strange clearness—"Would to God you knew what I have gained." Aungua's noble confession down in those gloomy cells was now sounding in Symoo's ears again. Such thoughts carried him away like a sweeping flood, and he started erect like one determined to cast off a burden. He looked around. The shades of night were fast stealing over the scene. The high priest felt a strange

feeling of dread, an indescribable presentiment of evil.

Hurriedly leaving the spot, he entered the huge temple, now lighted by many lamps. A few priests were there, and they drew humbly back as the high priest advanced to the great gilded idol. Here he paused in deep meditation, and then bowed before the high mass of wood, cement, and gilt. How strange this mental darkness! A man of such strength of mind and zealousness of heart; one who, under a holier teaching, would have been a bright one in the world; but, alas! his heart, and mind, and soul are immersed in ignorance; and now he is pouring out his troubled heart to his mute and helpless deity.

If the men of more blessed lands, flooded by Christian light, could gaze at this kneeling priest, and from him behold the object of his adoration, how must they pity his darkened state! But how many thousands, ay, millions of you, whilst bending the knee and raising the voice in a mocking worship of the true God, are grovelling in heart and soul in the dust before one of the lords many and gods many of this world!

The Seredan left the temple, and wended his way

down the covered way to his dwelling. He passed into his sleeping apartment with a calmer look on his face. Dismissing his many attendants, he walked up and down the superb chamber. The pillars carved and walls gilded, reflected the faint light of the oil lamp. Symoo continued pacing, sometimes stopping before a small but richly-decorated idol, and then would go to one of the large windows opening upon the garden. He opened the Venetian, and stood in the stream of cool air, gazing out into the deep gloom.

At length, more calm and quiet, the high priest betook himself to rest, having extinguished all but one of the lamps. This threw but a faint light over the apartment, as the Seredan lay on his costly couch. High over his head was the distinguishing mark of honour—the many-roofed, spire-crowned *piasath*. For some time Symoo slept not, but lay listening to the sound of lizards and mosquitoes; whilst through his open window were wafted other sounds so usual in the night. Gradually sleep crept over the Seredan, and he slumbered. It was but a fitful sleep. At short intervals he started up, and gazed around the dimly lighted room, and then would sleep again.

The hours fled apace, and the priest was deep in slumber ; but now a faint noise might be heard beneath the open window, and soon a dark face peered over the ledge. A body followed, and the intruder, naked and holding a long, slender dagger in his right hand, dropped silently into the room.

The naked form crept towards the couch where the high priest slumbered, which was on the left of the window.

With a start, Symoo awoke, to find a hand clasped over his mouth, and a tall, fierce-visaged man, with uplifted dagger, standing over him. The Seredan dared not move ; and, with horror, he recognised the native, as the faint rays of the lamp fell on his harsh features.

With a low, hissing tone, he spoke, still keeping his hand on the Seredan's mouth, and the gleaming blade ready to descend, " Ah, ah ! proud Seredan, the trodden snake hath some venom left, and strength to use it. By thine accursed teaching have I been led to this. You have taught me to lie, and rob, and murder, and you have cast me out—a branded felon : I am shunned ! What shall wipe away the stripes I have received—what shall purge the disgrace I have endured ? Ah, ah ! my new god is set up, and

he calls for a victim !—and who so fitting as you ? Art thou ready to go to Niebar, great Seredan ? Ah, if I could but hurl thee to the lowest hell and gloat over thy miseries, how would I exult ! But thou shalt die, knowing that the branded Koonah has done his utmost to destroy thee. I would let thee live, and see thee faltering to the grave amidst the ruin of all you hold dear—ruined by me ; but my time is short, and I seize the moment now ! Die, then, thou accursed Seredan, and by my hand !”

Hissing forth these words in a low tone, whilst fire flashed from the eyes of Koonah, who was worked up to a pitch of awful rage and madness, he withdrew his hand from Symoo’s mouth, and as the keen blade quivered in the air before it descended, the Seredan sprang up with a loud cry, and clutched Koonah’s other arm. The dagger, like a lightning flash, glittered, descended, and was buried to the hilt in Symoo’s side. With a groan, he fell back ; and the assassin, slipping from his victim’s grasp, disappeared through the window, leaving his dagger in the wound.


The cry had been heard ; and the door flying open, the priests rushed into the superb room, carrying many lights. Springing to the couch of



their revered superior, they found him faint and covered with blood, with his hand on the dagger-hilt.

Words cannot describe the scene that followed. Rushings here and rushings there. Priests fled hither and thither with the doleful news, and in the night the holy brethren flocked in from the different monasteries. Native doctors were called to attend the wounded priest, and foremost of the anxious throng might be seen poor Guhlinugah, on whose face most heartrending feelings were clearly portrayed. The doctors with a ready skill attended to the wound, and with long faces pronounced it serious. When able to look around and utter a few words, the Sere-dan, at the urgent request of his priests, briefly detailed the events of the night. At Koonah's name they all gazed at one another, and poor Guhlinugah held down his head, no doubt recalling his former participation in the assassin's sins.

The night passed away and morning dawned. The priests, whose duty it was, perambulated the city, receiving the daily contributions, and others went to their sacred toils in the temple; but the greater part remained lingering about the dwelling of their wounded superior. He lay in a critical state. The



great loss of blood had weakened him to an alarming extent, and in defiance of the doctors he was slowly sinking.

Throughout the town the sad news had spread, and hundreds, nay, thousands, flocked up the roads, but were kept from entering by the jealous priests. Within, numerous doctors were assembled around the dying man, holding a serious consultation, whilst anxious priests looked on.

"What else can thus defy our skill and medicines, but the evil gnats and demons of the air?" asked one of the men of medicine, appealing to his brethren.

"Thou hast said truly," one answered; "our skill is great, but the evil spirits are greater."

"What, then, shall be done?" asked a third.

"If they be angry with the holy Seredan because he hath ever sought to check their influence, then let us make them offerings, and perchance they may be pleased to withdraw their evil power," rejoined the doctor who first spoke. To this the others yielded assent, and Symoo faintly uttered his desire that they should so do.

An outbuilding in the garden was accordingly prepared. Musicians were assembled, and a Burmese

female, anxious to show her respect for the high priest, offered her services. Doubtless she well understood her task. When all was in readiness, and the girl placed within a circle, formed by the doctors and priests, the music sounded, and the female commenced dancing to the wild tune. Louder and quicker sounded the music, in tones to excite the dancer, and she kept time with her rapid movements. The music and the dance continued until, carried to a high pitch of excitement, the foam fell from the dancer's mouth, and, exhausted with her exertions, she sank to the ground in a swoon.

Whilst in this condition the doctors approached, and with a great show of ceremony, inquired of the senseless girl which demon had bewitched the Seredan. Pretending to receive a reply, they directed the priests, who now placed offerings within the shed, to appease the angry demon.

With such means did the doctors endeavour to heal the Seredan's wounds, but in vain. Offerings and prayers all proved fruitless, and laying all the blame on the unappeasable demon, the doctors and priests again assembled around the couch of the wounded Seredan.

He was rapidly passing away. At times he would

rally and speak to those around, but Symoo felt a something within slowly creeping over his body, and each moment increasing his agony. The wound alone could not produce this; although deep and serious, his life might have been saved, but he felt convinced the dagger was poisoned, and although he breathed not of this to those around his couch, he felt the subtle venom working over his body. His time was near. Knowing this, the Seredan motioned for the medical men to withdraw, and his priests crowded into the room.

They loved their superior. Never had they been under one so talented or so good. In true idolatry his heart bowed before the object of his worship, and in him they had seen less deception than in any they knew. Assembled now around his couch, few of their eyes remained unmoistened. Having no sympathy with the rude, strange hilarity of the other natives in times of calamity, and though believing their high priest, when released from the clay, would soar to the highest heaven, they sorrowed that to them he would be lost. Expressing their sincere grief in audible sounds the numerous yellow-clad priests gathered around the dying Seredan's couch.

At a motion from him, those near raised Symoo until

he sat upright, and in that position they supported him. And now summoning all his fast-fading strength, the Seredan glanced slowly around on the sorrowful faces present, and with a faint but clear voice thus addressed them :—" My children, I had fondly dreamed of spending many years with you, cheering and helping you in your noble and meritorious endeavours to live above the follies of this world. It is not so to be, my children. Our god has called me to share the joys of Nieban. There, high, exalted above the joys of the highest heaven, will my soul be lost in the blaze of Guadama's glory. The drops will be swallowed up in the mighty ocean ; the beam of light return to its fountain. Can you weep, my sons, that such joys are to be mine? Before I depart, I would bid you, children, to continue in the upward path. Shun the pleasures and deception of life. By good deeds and self-denial, and holy meditation, strive to be separate from things of sense. With perseverance build the ladder, and when from the body your souls depart, then, worthy of a better fate than filling the bodies of other men, you shall reach that climax of heaven, where all is void of sense, and feeling, or perception. Doubtless this deadly wound is a punishment for sins I have been guilty of in former lives ; but I

fear not. My whole life has been spent in holiness."

Here the Seredan paused from weakness, and then continued in even a fainter voice:—"My children, take the evil Koonah as a lesson of sin. With cunning skill, evil demons have lured him from the truth. Daring to put his hand on Guadama's wealth he has sunk in the river of iniquity. This wound is from him. Ah, shun ye all those demon whispers against our religion. Bow your knees and your hearts before our Buddha wherever you see him figured, and listen not to evil whispers. Whoever shall be found worthy to fill my rank, him obey."

Again the Seredan paused; at length rousing from the stupor which was rapidly stealing over him, he exclaimed with a firmer voice, and an excited manner:—"Children, to what joys am I going! Here have I lived a faithful servant to my god, and now I go to receive my reward. Oh, what a reward is that! Life is but a punishment, a curse. To feel, to act, to live, is it not a toil? To be absorbed in that vast sea, where life is unknown; where joys cannot please, nor pains annoy; what, my children, can be more desired? Like as going up the height of our own loved pagoda, so will my spirit soar

above each world of delight, and then launch off into space. My senses flown and dissipated, I shall slumber through countless ages."

The high priest ceased and fell back exhausted in a swoon.

When he again rallied, it was on the brink of death. At times he would burst out in ecstasies at the joys of annihilation which awaited him, and then suddenly a cloud would shade his thin but expressive face, and he faintly murmured :—"And hereafter—not destruction, but life—joy—purity. His blessed home—for ever." Then would he writhe with intense agony as he felt the poison preying upon his frame. With such alternations of doubt and joy, the Seredan's soul neared the brink of the dark river. The clustering priests saw the life taper waning away. One puff, and it would be gone. Again those eyes open and gleam with an unearthly fire ; he essayed to raise his hands and point above ; the lips move, and with his last breath he exclaimed, "Great Buddha, I hasten ! Life flies away—Nieban draws near—I come !—I come !"

The voice ceased ; the hands dropped ; a thrill of pain shot through his body ; the icy hand of death was there, and that noble but darkened heart was

still in death, and that misled but precious soul fled where none but One can tell.

Gaze now upon that cold and lifeless body. Think of that high soul, noble heart, and soaring mind, all bowed before the shrine of idolatry. Gaze, but tremble at the power of the great enemy of souls, who could thus entomb that mind, wither those powers, and lead on that soul in darkness, lured by the false light of hell, and when grasping at the fond dreams, the light fades, and the soul is launched out upon a wild, black, uncertain sea of eternity.

The idolater is dead ; but, alas, idolatry died not with him. Like a gaunt spectre, in ten thousand shapes, it stalks over the world ; in eastern and western climes ; among learned and ignorant ; the high and mighty, as well as poor and humble. It glides through every land ; is seen in every home, bowing down the hearts of men and stealing the soul's love !



## CHAPTER V.

## THE SAUCY JANE'S CREW.

AFTER his night's adventure in the mountain village, Aungua remained quiet in his sheltered nook on the beacon-hill. Making no more journeys to either of the villages, he kindled the huge fire every night, having now raised a heap of stones and rubbish, that the blaze might be well seen over the rocky parapet. Each day he hunted, and also gathered of the rich, wild fruits growing on the river banks, and the clear well at the hill base supplied both himself and horse with water. Cheered with the knowledge that Monien was also in the village, he waited anxiously as the days passed by for any sign of the brigantine off the bay. Puzzled at her long absence, but well knowing the madness of trying to rescue Domea alone from the well-guarded village, he still watched and waited. He had prepared the wood for the fire now the eleventh time, and was standing on his high observatory, looking down on the bay at his feet, as

the sun was going down. Near him the steed nibbled at the trees around, and the spot looked little different from when we first beheld it.

Again the grand scene of sunset was unfolding before Aungua, but the fierce blaze of light, melting sea and sky in one, prevented him from seeing, immediately under the sun, the lofty spars and sails of the brigantine. For many hours had she been off the coast tacking up against the north-east wind. Although her high royal might be seen at a distance of full thirty miles from Aungua's beacon height, yet he, with unassisted eyes, could not distinguish her at that great distance. She had tacked for the third time since sighting the high hills on the distant land, and was now standing east by south for the bay, with her port tack aboard. With her yards braced sharp up, Aungua could not discover the *Saucy Jane* as she sailed rapidly in. The blazing sun seemed resting for a second on the water's edge, and shading his eyes, Aungua gazed at the glorious vision; the great orb encircled by veiling clouds, which seemed rudely clipping off its rays; and just as the luminary sank beneath the west, his eye caught some dark and distant figure apparently right in the sun.

It went down! the vision disappeared, and night

rushing over the eastern hills drove the brief twilight into the ocean. Aungua turned away and kindled his fire, but then returned to the parapet to watch the bay being enrobed in night. He watched long, and was turning to add more fuel to the blaze, when a sound like the boom of a distant gun from the sea startled him. He knew the signal, and with a thankful heart heaped log upon log on the crackling beacon fire, and then saddling his steed he led the animal carefully down the steep winding hill, and set off at once in the darkness for the bay. It was not a pitch dark night, for the stars were peeping down from the huge vault, and the crescent moon, low in altitude, now and then emerged from her canopy of scudding clouds to throw a faint light over the scene.

The *Saucy Jane* stood in right for the bay, and under the skilful management of Captain Grasper, who kept the leadsman constantly at work, she passed the rocks and shoals, until about ten miles to the south-west of the beacon hill, when Grasper threw her round on the other tack, and doubling a large island, cast anchor full five miles from where Aungua now stood. The water was deep, and Grasper might have taken the brigantine nearer the shore, but here he had a clear run for the sea, and, more-

over, was under the lee of a small island which screened the vessel from the land.

It was past nine o'clock when the brigantine's boats, fully manned, lay alongside the beach, and Captain Grasper jumping on shore, scrambled up the bank, and seized Aungua heartily by the hand, as he stood by the side of his horse. The greeting over, Grasper scanned his young friend, and with a smile exclaimed, "My eyes, lad, but you'd be an awkward craft to get foul of." Well might he say so, for Aungua was armed at all points; but Aungua replied, "Our task will need arms and strength, good captain. During the many days I have kept my lonely watch, I have needed my bow for hunting."

"You're right," said Grasper, and in truth he was no trifle himself to fall across. "Let us to work, Aungua;" he added, "what news about the cage and the birds?"

Before Aungua replied, the smuggler stepped to the edge of the little bank overhanging the beach, and called out "Harding, get the lads ashore, and get the boats' painters out."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response, and Grasper again turned to Aungua, saying "Now, lad, heave ahead."

Aungua replied with a sketch of what he had been doing since leaving the captain, and having brought his relation down to coming through the pass, he continued, "I then determined to enter the village, and try to discover where they are confined, to make our work more certain."

"Quite right," broke in Grasper; "and what sort of fellows are the villagers?"

"As far as I could learn," replied Aungua, "they are shepherds and hunters. They have the name of being quiet and industrious people."

"They'll do, Aungua," said the smuggler; "I think with those lads below we shall work the oracle, eh?"

Aungua followed the direction of the captain's arm, and in the light of the bright stars and faint moon, he saw a great muster of men on the beach, all armed and ready for work. He then replied, "I have no fear of that, captain. Never have I seen such powerful, fearless looking men."

Pleased with this, Grasper said, "Ay, they are the pick of my crew. Forty-five of them, and more aboard if wanted. Must leave some to look after the craft, you know. But I'll warrant, with those

boys at my back, to go through any village ever built! But heave ahead, Aungua."

"Well then, captain, to continue. I succeeded in entering the village. It is surrounded by a strong and high stockade. Inside, I found it contained many more huts than I imagined; and the place was well stocked with trees, with several large spaces between. The fierce dogs about made me very careful. To find in which dwelling my friends are confined, I listened at several huts; and overhearing a conversation, I found my way to the centre of the village. There were many armed men about on guard and savage dogs on the watch; but I managed to evade them all, and discovered my friends were in the chief's own dwelling. I wanted to make myself known to them, but could only scratch my name on a leaf, and drop it into the room. I had no time to do more, as the dogs discovered me, and the alarm spread. I had to slay two of the savage brutes, and escape from the men."

"Bravo, lad, bravo!" cried the captain, highly pleased at Aungua's narration. "Tell me a little more."

Aungua gratified him with a more minute detail of that night's adventure, and then said—

"Now, good captain, we must determine on the course we should pursue, for the night is far advanced."

"True, true; it's nearly four bells, I guess. But the run round to the village: how long is it?"

"Several hours," replied Aungua; "but the tide will soon be setting in, and that is in our favour. Besides, it will have changed again as we return."

"Several hours!" said the captain, meditating over those words. "We had better keep quiet for to-night, Aungua, and have a fair start to-morrow evening."

"There is danger in that, captain," replied Aungua; "for I have noticed near the mouth of the river several native vessels are anchored. Whether they noticed my light I cannot tell, but they would think it only some hunter's fire. They would be certain to see your vessel, and so give an alarm, and thwart our plans."

"I'm ready—I'm ready!" the smuggler exclaimed; "we'll do it to-night, then. There's a good breeze to carry us down to the river, and by that time the tide will be in strong and the pulling easy. Now,

Aungua, what's to be done when we reach the village?"

"Here you must give your good counsel, captain. If we attack them openly, they may remove their prisoners to the mountain forest in the rear."

"And, lad," said Grasper, "supposing we go like you did, and get in unawares, there are the dogs to smell us out."

Both the captain and Aungua remained silent and musing for some time, each leaning against the horse standing quietly.

At length Grasper exclaimed, "I've hit on a plan, Aungua. I'll go with you, and take some of the smartest of the Jacks, and we'll creep in sily. Never mind the dogs, we'll belay their growling in a brace of shakes. You shall get near the house, and if the way is clear get through the porthole, and get them to follow you out again. I'll be at hand. The other lads by that time shall have the boats alongside the front gate, and have it open, and the way clear. If the alarm is raised and the villagers turn out, then we'll cut our way through!"

Grasper paused. This was a bold scheme, but nothing less would please his daring spirit.



Aungua replied, "I can see no other way, captain ; we must do it boldly and fight hard ; but what if we are scented by the dogs and discovered before we reach the house ?"

"Well, in that case a shot will fetch in all hands with a rush, and we'll carry the place by storm before the villagers are half awake."

Aungua readily agreed to this. Any plan, however daring, he was ready to join, in order to release Domea.

After a few more words, Grasper observed, "There's one little dodge, Aungua, which I reckon we should do well to carry out. In the scrimmage, you know, the lasses will be in danger of being laid on their beam ends with a stray shot, or an arrow, or something of the sort ; and I guess their canoes will swarm after us like mosquitoes !"

In his eagerness, Aungua had not thought of this ; but Grasper, well used to cunning plans and bold schemes, left nothing probable out of the question.

Before Aungua could reply, he continued, "This animal seems a good one. Will he go over the ground well ?"

"He will, indeed, captain. He is a noble, fleet,

and faithful creature. I shall be sorry to leave him behind."

"No need of that, no need," responded the smuggler; "but now I have an idea that if you take the horse across the land, and fall in with me about the village, then, when the lass you love is free, you can put her on the animal behind you, and away to this place like a flying Dutchman. I can keep the rogues back at the gate until you are clear off, and then we'll play with them a little, and pick you up after. Will that do, Aungua?"

"Captain, how can I thank you enough?"

"Shut up, lad; shut up. Will the nag do it?"

"He will," replied Aungua. "It will be a long and a rapid ride, but I know his worth. He will do it, captain."

This led to Grasper examining the horse, and expressing his approbation of the noble steed, with a heavy slap on his haunches, which made the animal start.

"Come, then, come!" said Grasper. "The night is passing. Up, and off with you. I know my course. You'll be there before I shall, so don't flurry yourself over it."

"I will see you off first, captain," said Aungua.

"As you will," responded Grasper, as he now sprang down upon the beach.

"Get aboard, lads! get aboard! and loose the muslin!"

The men obeyed, and were soon in their respective boats, with the masts stepped and sails flapping. The lugger and two quarter-boats were there. The men were armed with keen, heavy, naked cutlasses, hanging from their belts, which also carried pistols. One half of the crew had muskets slung over their backs, and the others held long boarding-pikes in their hands. They formed a band, armed and daring enough for any bold feat. The only distinguishing feature in the captain's dress and accoutrements was, that he wore heavy boots; a striped Guernsey instead of all blue; a blue cap instead of red, such as the crew wore; and his cutlass had a rich gilded hilt, whilst his pistols were likewise of high finish. He carried no musket or boarding-pike.

Aungua mounted his steed and remained looking down on the misty forms of the smugglers as they embarked. The boats were shoved off, sails hoisted, and he saw their dark forms bowling away before the

breeze. He then turned his horse's head inland, and struck off at a brisk pace.

Some considerable time passed, nearly two hours, when the boats, under a crowd of canvas, reached the opening of the river. Thus far the wind had been strong and fair, but now their course lay against the breeze.

This mattered little, as the tide was setting in rapidly, and with their long oars worked by strong arms, the boats shot up the river, keeping well in to the land. The river banks were low, and covered with dense tracts of trees and underwood. Here and there a break revealed a winding creek; or the land shelving and trees retiring, showed a fairy beach. This was more particularly the case at the numerous bendings of the river.

Pulling with short spells, the men felt the work easy, as the flood-tide now swept them on. One half of the river journey accomplished, they came to a sharp bend, where the land, stripped of foliage, jutted into the stream. Here they spied a figure, and getting nearer the shore, found it was Aungua on his steed, warm with the distance it had travelled, but looking fresh and eager for more. It tossed its noble head,

shook its mane, and pawed the ground, as if anticipating the sharp run it was likely to get before day dawned upon the scene.

A few words passed between Grasper, who was steering the lugger, and his Burman friend, in which Aungua said he would follow the bend of the river as much as the dense groups of trees would allow.

Again the horse sped away, and the boats were propelled as before up the broad river. The night had grown considerably darker, and the bordering trees could scarcely be distinguished. On one side they were entirely lost in the gloom, but the captain kept near the bank along which Aungua was riding. At several openings they found him on the look-out, and resting his steed. With a wave of the hand as they swept around, he again dashed off.

The journey was of great length, but determined to succeed, and knowing the return trip would be under full sail, with a good breeze astern, and that the tide would then be in their favour, Grasper pressed on. At about three in the morning, the men lay upon their oars off the desired village, which they could not well discern in the dark, but knew it to be the one from Aungua, who was now on the left bank.

Grasper now sprang ashore, and held a low consultation with him.

"The time is short," said Grasper. "We must bear a hand, or the daylight will be peeping over the hills."

"True," replied Aungua; "I will take my horse across the river, and you take the boats. We must be silent, but quick in our movements."

"Step along, then, Aungua," replied the captain, and as he returned to the lugger he saw him ride his horse into the stream.

"Give way, lads; give way." The men obeyed their captain, but kept their eyes on the young Burman. The horse was now in deep water, and as he struck out to swim, Aungua slipped off his back, and keeping one hand on the horse's mane, he also struck boldly out for the opposite shore. This eased the animal and refreshed himself.

Soon the smugglers mustered silently, and Grasper leaving full directions to Harding, in charge of the remainder of the crew, he selected sixteen, all armed with muskets besides their other weapons. Aungua now led this little band close in to the stockade and to the spot where he had before got over. To mount the steed, cast a strong rope ladder and make it taut, occupied very little time. Leaving a man to

take the horse round with the boats, Aungua got over the stockade, closely followed by Grasper and the smugglers.

Once within, the captain yielded himself entirely to Aungua's guidance, and obeying his orders they cautiously listened for any noises. All was as still as could be desired. Men and dogs and cattle were all apparently in deep slumber. The mountaineers little dreamt of the threatened assault. Secure in their own strength they slept. Aungua's heart was rapidly beating within him. He seemed already to have Domea once more by his side ; but he was anxious. Love always was, and always will be a trembling thing. As they glided on their silent way amid the dark trees, each of the men with muskets unslung, he rapidly recalled the brief events of his first visit here. He almost repented of having dropped the arrow through the window ; he knew not who else might have been in the room. Perhaps it had been seen by others, and Domea and Momien removed elsewhere. Whatever it might be, a few moments must now decide ; but in those brief moments blood may be spilt and lives lost !

Grasper, too, was deep in thought. Fears of failure never once crossed his mind. He knew his

men to be well tried and fearless; too eager, in truth, for any such work. Neither was he ignorant of his own powers and skill. From his earliest days he could remember he had been mixed up in scenes of peril and daring. Oftentimes had his giant strength and skill in swimming carried him through dangers that would have daunted thousands of bold men. He knew his might, but with might he combined skilful planning. That open face of his, so frank, so manly, seldom gave indications of a planning spirit within; but such a spirit was nevertheless there. The most doubtful cases to him were rapidly cleared. Bold and cunning plans, striking for their simplicity and for their daring, seemed to be the glory of this smuggler chief. Such a plan he was now carrying out, and it was not at all likely that with his well tried, eager men to back him, he feared the result.

No ; Captain Harry Grasper was thinking of somewhat else. He had come hither for the purpose of aiding his young Burman friend. It was sometimes a puzzle to himself why he felt so attached to him. Love for bold spirits, a desire for novelty, and a determination to see fair play was doubtless the cause of this. At all events, he did, in his rough way, feel a strong attachment for Aungua, and would willingly



have put forth all his strength, and even open his coffers in his service. Captain Grasper's aim, it is true, was the acquisition of wealth by any means, good or bad, in accordance with his lawless character ; but he was not a miser. Far from that ! He liberally launched out for the comfort of his crew, and to help others. He was prodigal in one sense, but he well knew the little streams he so readily scattered around would return in swelling rivers. Such had been the case with his connexion with the priest, Koonah. Liberally rewarding him and falling into his views had brought him more wealth than a whole twelvemonth's piracy, or perhaps longer, in the Indian waters could do.

With all this his friendship for Aungua partook of a higher tone. His own manly but sin-seared qualities were here brought to light. He was helping Aungua from sheer love of the Burman ; but if we imagine no dash of self was mingled with this, we know not the man. Wealth is the idol he has unconsciously set up ; wealth is the goal of his race, the aim of all his wrongs, and never can he exclude this object from his plans. Captain Grasper thought of this. Following Aungua on their stealthy way, he was devising some plan of doing a little business

for himself at the same time. Their course of action he fully intended carrying out; but might he not step a little on one side to pick up a prize? Of course he could, and most decidedly he would; but a few difficulties must be met and dealt with. It must be done without Aungua's knowledge. Grasper knew the character of his friend too well to risk unfolding his own to him. Again it must be done boldly and smartly. A commotion must ensue. He was in no mood to act the stealthy robber. With so many hands what need of it? But if he should make a bold dash at the chief's dwelling, wherein he fancied the best prize could be gained, it would place Aungua in danger. Difficulty after difficulty arose in Grasper's mind, and he welcomed them right heartily. The greater the danger the sweeter the success, he argued, and when he had all the obstacles he could think of before him, he proceeded to sweep them away from his path.

At all events, the girl must be got out, with her companions, either by stealth or by might. By stealth will not do for Grasper's plans. It must be by a rush—a sudden, fierce storming of the dwelling, making her room window the place of ingress. Once

inside, the alarm raised, they must cut their way out, and in the confusion, the place be ransacked, and the double object gained.

In the dark a smile played around the corners of Grasper's mouth. The only thing now to be done was either by persuasion with Aungua to adopt the plan of all entering the dwelling, or else to accidentally explode a pistol, tumble across a dog, run foul of a sentinel, or something of the sort, and thus render the storming necessary.

This long string of ideas took little time in passing through his mind, and Grasper had stepped closer to Aungua, and whispered his suggestion for all to enter. They were within a few yards of the dwelling, and paused for a moment in the gloom of the trees. Nothing could be more favourable for the project. Scarcely a sound could be heard, but no time must be lost. The hills and forests rendered the darkness more intense, but soon morning would be rushing down upon them, and the villagers be stirring.

Aungua needed little persuasion to adopt Grasper's new mode of proceeding. The smuggler hinted the probability of the lass, as he termed Domea, not knowing her name, being in a separate room from her old friend, and therefore he would need assistance.

Seeing the reason of this, Aungua agreed, and the whole party glided towards the stockade or little palisade, and quietly clambered over.

The same window from which Aungua had heard Momien's hymn come forth, they now stood near. All was steeped in stillness. Not a creature could be seen. Aungua had seen no guards, as on the night of his first visit, and this strange quietude and unwatchfulness, as it appeared to be, gave him slight misgivings. He tried the window, but the Venetian was fastened from the inside! What now must be done? There is only one way, and that, to force it open. Grasper examined it, but Aungua, quicker in his thought and movement, inserted his hand between the bars, felt the fastening, and opened the window.

All now was clear. But a few moments had elapsed since they entered the village. Aungua, assisted by the captain, and keeping his sword and shield as clear as possible, entered the casement and dropped within. Grasper followed, then some of the crew, with noiseless movements.

A sound checked the remainder, more than eight or nine in number. Simultaneous with a slight noise from the room which their chief had entered, with

their comrades, a sound of rushing footsteps made them cock their muskets and draw together. The silence was broken. Dogs yelled and men's shouts rose in the air. In the dark the smuggler saw several forms advancing with a rush, and levelling their muskets, they fired a volley into the mass. The reports awoke loud responses on all sides, and as they slung the discharged weapons over their shoulders, and the heavy cutlasses sprang from their belts, a loud, ringing blast of a horn sounded above the confusion, and within a few feet from where they stood at bay.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE TIGER OF YUMADONG.

MOMIEN was still an invalid, but, under the blessing of God, under Domea's untiring attention and native skill he was rapidly regaining strength. He could now walk about the apartment, but as yet ventured not without. As he sat in the room allotted to his use, in company with Domea, whilst Loo is out on some errand, an air of anxiety and concern is evident on his countenance, whilst Domea appears agitated and restless. Their conversation is carried on in low tones, as if fearful of being overheard. We need not wonder at their unsettled appearance, for several nights previous, as old Momien sat with his two charges, Domea and her maid, and just as they commenced their evening offerings up of prayer, a noise arrested them, and an arrow fell into the room. The excitement which this caused with the females may be better imagined than described. With a calmer mind Momien

examined the leaf letter, and thereon saw the name of "Aungua." Like frost before the fierce sun Domea's tears were dried and her melancholy dispelled. Without a doubt, Aungua was near at hand, and that to help them. Wearily the days passed, and the three were watching with intense interest, but nothing further transpired. Domea was now full of anxiety; this new surprise had roused her, but again sadness began to creep over her young heart. Her mind misgave her, for simultaneously with the fall of the arrow, they had heard sounds just beneath the window, and soon afterwards shouts of men in the village, and runnings to and fro in the dwelling they now occupied. At the time she seemed on the border of despair, being so anxious for Aungua's fate. These misgivings now returned afresh.

"Oh, Momien," she exclaimed, "I cannot shake off the sad feelings I had on that night!"

"Nay, Domea, my child," replied Momien, "you do wrong in thus desponding. Were we not told that whoever the intruder was, and I believe it to be our Aungua, he escaped, though with great difficulty. Do you not remember, my daughter, how he was seen to gallop away from the river. Why, then, so desponding? Aungua is safe!"

"Oh, father, I am wrong ; but then, may they not have traced him, or penetrated his reasons for venturing here, and so prevent his aiding us?"

"Ah, my child," Momien replied, "it must be no common obstacle indeed to restrain Aungua ; but, Domea, you have no grounds for even this supposition ; did not the villagers discover a portion of some deer without the stockade, and so concluded the intruder was but a lawless hunter?"

"Yes, good Momien, I know they did," answered Domea, unable to find any support for her misgivings. "I know they did, my father," she continued ; "but Loo has heard the villagers speak much of the stranger, whom my heart tells me was dear Aungua, and they talk much of his daring."

After a brief silence Domea again spoke. "Where can dear Aungua be? How long it is since that night!"

"I wish we had some further information of him, my daughter ; but we can only continue to watch, and prevent those around us from having suspicions. Try to be calm, Domea, and be prepared at any moment, for I feel assured Aungua will come only by night. He is alone and friendless, so far as human friends go ; but we know we never can be



alone, for God is ever present. Ah, my daughter, I would we had this blessed thought more worked out in our lives—'Thou God seest me,'—would then cheer us in days of adversity; help us to withstand the tempter more successfully, and make us go on our way amid flowers and amid thorns, singing hymns of joy. See how strangely and yet how lovingly all things have been hitherto working for our good." The old man's face beamed, as if the rays of future glory already lighted on him, and then he continued :—"To return, child. Aungua having no human friend, must of necessity enter this village alone and by night."

"Oh, Momien," broke in Domea, "if he could but know that the chief and his men are away now. There are but few here, and the men are old. When the lord is here, Loo has found that strict watches are kept, armed men are about; but when he is away, all vigilance ceases."

"True, my child," said Momien, as Domea, who had spoken excitedly, ceased; "true, but we must abide the Lord's time. Have you heard when the chief is expected to return?"

Domea answered, "Loo told me she heard rumours of his return being daily expected. Oh, Momien,

what if dear Aungua should seek out his friend, Behring?"

"Did he not say he was with the Boa's army?" replied the old man; "and, besides, does he not live many, many miles far to the north of this village? Moreover, my child, so many men are here when the lord is at home as would defy all attempts at open attack."

Domea was too deeply buried in thought to make any further reply; after some moments had elapsed the two continued conversing on various topics until re-joined by the maid, Loo.

That faithful and intelligent attendant had busied herself each day in finding out all she could about the village and its inhabitants; but she was much puzzled. The chief she could not at all comprehend: his apparent peaceable behaviour at home, and then his strange journeys, and emptying the village of men! This gave her little concern, her principal object being to discover some means of escape; and now Momien was with them, a plan would soon have been thought of, but the arrow dropped in by Aungua checked all plans, and now they anxiously waited some sign of his being near them. Every night would

Domea and Loo keep alternate watch in their own apartment adjoining Momien's.

Daughters of other lands might soon have given way under these continual vigils ; but not so these brave maidens of Burmah.

After the above conversation, Domea and her maid left Momien as the shades of night crept over the snug, sheltered village, and retired to their own rooms—not to sleep, but to watch. Hours passed by : Loo had watched, and now lay buried in a sound sleep, whilst Domea, wrapped in her mantle, stood near the window in the dark, listening for every sound breaking the stillness of night without.

A strange silence was over all. Alone, but stout-hearted, the brave girl kept her midnight watch. Her thoughts were busy. Never did woman love as she did. Fond, faithful, and thoughtful, she wished only to see Aungua happy. Never once did her love or her thoughts prove faithless to him. Anything that grieved him she joyfully gave up, finding her pleasure in his. Well knowing the great sway she held over her lover, she never used it but in love. Nothing which she would not do herself would she desire him to perform.

As she watched in the still night her thoughts roamed from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth again ; but suddenly a sound without made her cling closer to the window. She heard whisperings ; and listening with suppressed breath, she heard something drop on to the floor of Momien's room. Hastily touching Loo, who started to her feet, Domea gently opened the door, and unheard by any of the inmates, crept to Momien's, and entered, closely followed by the maid.

Aungua was there ! As he dropped through the window, he was met by Momien, who had heard the slight noise. Like father and son, in that dimly lighted room, the two Christians meet ; and before Aungua could ask for Domea, the door opened, and she entered. Pausing for a second, as she beheld with amazement the smugglers dropping one by one from the window ; in another, Domea was in Aungua's arms, without a cry, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

Well knowing the danger of a noise, the lovers spoke hurriedly in whispers ; and then Aungua, feeling the necessity of immediate action, in a few words explained to Momien his plans. It was

no time for objections; no time for explanations. Momien rapidly revealed the true state of the village.

Before their plans could be fixed, a confusion suddenly arose outside the hut, and a sharp volley from the smugglers' pieces made Grasper start and exclaim—

“Strand the craft!—the game is up! What are the fools about? Come, Aungua, let's to work; for we're scented out.”

As he ceased, the loud blast of a horn from the same quarter was heard, and the sounds of a sharp conflict, mingled with the smugglers' cheers, rang through the air.

“Away! Aungua, we must away!” said Momien, in a rapid voice; “that horn will summon hundreds of armed and daring men from the mountains.”

“Whew!” whistled the captain, as he drew his heavy blade and loosened a pistol in his belt; “here's a nest of wasps! We must make a dash, Aungua—so here goes.”

Without more ado, Grasper told his plans, and the party at once closed around. There was no chance now for his pet plan, to get the lord's wealth, so Grasper took the command, determined to convoy

the party through all obstacles. Sending one hand through the window again, to tell the party outside to fight their way to the front of the dwelling, the captain now had Momien and the females placed in the centre, under Aungua's especial care ; whilst his men led the van, headed by himself, and brought up the rear with cutlasses in hand.

Seizing the lamp, Grasper hurled open the door, whilst the sounds of confusion increased on all sides. Not a creature was in the hall ; but as the front door was wrenched open, the little party at once saw torches gleaming. Around the door the smugglers had gathered, keeping back the armed villagers, who were now increasing fast.

"Right and left, lads ! right and left !—one and all, one and all !" shouted Grasper, as he sprang into the midst of the crowd. "No pistols, lads ; no shots, till all hands are here. Ah, there they come !"

Sure enough the main body of the smugglers had made their entrance, and were now coming with a run towards the scene of conflict, which they soon reached.

Rapidly placing this band of hardy and determined men on all sides round his charges in the

centre, free of danger, Aungua, at Grasper's side, nobly plied his keen sword with effect. Using only swords and spears—fearing to use arrows in the dark—the villagers fell back, as the mass of smugglers advanced steadily towards the stockade.

Again the horn-blast sounded, and immediately was answered by another, quite in the rear of the village. Urged on by this, the villagers threw themselves in a mass across the smugglers' path; but more frightened than hurt, they recoiled from the terrific sweeps of the heavy cutlasses.

It now became a scene of wild confusion. In the medley, little mischief was done on either side, as the smugglers' blades beat down or shattered the weapons of their opponents; and Grasper bade them reserve their fire for a last extremity. Still heading his men, the captain saw the strength of the villagers. Torches flamed on all sides, revealing men and dogs; whilst yells, and shouts, and ringing of weapons filled the air.

All this transpired with surprising rapidity; and the resolute villagers, cheered on by the horn they had heard, stoutly endeavoured to check the smugglers' progress, but in vain. Again a horn-blast sounded, and this time it came from close behind,

followed by a shout from many voices, which the villagers caught up with a yell of delight.

Grasper turned to the rear, and now saw a strong body of natives coming up with speed. He soon smartly arranged his men into a compact mass, to meet foes on all points ; whilst Momien and the females still occupied the centre, well protected by the bodies of their rough guards. On came the fresh body, their spears and sword-blades glancing, as the glare of the many torches fell on them.

“ Shall we give them a broadside, cap’n ? ” asked Harding, at Grasper’s side.

“ No, no,” replied he ; “ play them with sword and pike, until it gets too hot. Stand steady, lads ! steady ! and fight ‘ for one and all ! ’ ” roared out the smuggler, as the natives, headed by the strange chief with the tiger-skin mask hiding his face violently assaulted the determined band. They recoiled, however, as speedily as they came amid a loud huzza from the tars. Nothing daunted, the “ Tiger Mask ” again led his men at the slowly retreating wall of pikes and swords, carrying in his hand a blazing torch, which gave him a strange appearance. Grasper seeing him advance, stepped forward and met the chief, determined to try his powers. “ Tiger



Mask " yielded before the sweeps of the smuggler's blade, but his men rallied around him, whilst Harding and Aungua, who had come to the rear, backed up Grasper. Pressing to Grasper's side, Aungua came in the full light of the chieftain's torch, and saw the captain, with a grand stroke, send his weapon flying in the air. Loud rang the smuggler's shout of "one and all!" and in another second "Tiger Mask" would have been cut to the earth, but he sprang back, and catching sight of Aungua's dark skin, as he drove Kala back, the chieftain shouted—"Hold! hold! Aungua! hold!"

Grasper's and Aungua's swords dropped at his name thus shouted out, and the chief, raising his bugle, blew a blast, which at once made the natives draw back. All this took no more time than a few seconds. The conflict ceased, and the "Tiger Mask," advancing to Aungua, lifted his mask from his face and dropped it again. That glance was enough. Casting down his sword, Aungua sprang forward with an exclamation—

"What, Behring! can it be you?"

"Indeed it is, Aungua," replied the chief, as he warmly grasped Aungua's extended hand. "But

what means all this confusion? How came you here?"

"Well might I ask you the same, Behring, 'How came *you* here?' But to explain this, you had my friends and betrothed wife as prisoners. Ignorant of this village being yours, and thinking you were with the Boa's army, I have come with these brave men to rescue them!"

"Your friends and your betrothed!" exclaimed the chief with amazement, and became still more amazed as the smugglers opening, Momien and Domea, followed by Loo, each with wonder and inexpressible surprise depicted on their countenances, stepped towards him.

"They are, indeed, Behring," replied Aungua; "but let us disperse these warriors and calmly explain these strange events."

Whilst this was going onward, it was amusing to watch the twistings and contortions of Grasper's face. What to make of it he could not guess; but, turning to his new boatswain, he remarked—

"Strand me! Harding, but this is as good as a play. It slues me right out. Here we come, hammer and tongs, at these niggers, and, strand me! but

we're chums, after all. Thunder and lightning! but this is a puzzler. A queer world this!"

Before Harding could reply, the chieftain of the village, still masked, turned to his men, and waving his hand for silence, he cried—

"Here is some mistake! These are friends and not foes! Let all conflict cease. I fear some are wounded on both sides, but treat these strangers well. Disperse now, and on the morrow I will explain more of this!"

Giving some commands to his under chiefs about any who might be wounded, and for the good treatment of the bold strangers, the chief turned again to Aungua and the others.

"Come, Aungua," said he, "let us within and explain these things. Your friends have received no harm or unkindness whilst here, beyond being deprived of liberty. Had I but known who they were—well, Aungua, we will talk of this. Brave stranger," turning to Grasper as he spoke, "this was a timely recognition, or your strong arm would have deprived me of life. Come with us to my dwelling. Your bold followers shall be well looked after."

This was in the Burmese tongue, and the captain made some reply, whilst his men gazed curiously at

the strange masked chief, and passed many rough jokes among themselves. They, in turn, were carefully scanned by the chief and the villagers, who had never before seen such warriors as the tars had proved to be.

The chief and his new found friends moved towards the dwelling, and Grasper, before following, turned to his men—"Harding," said he, "follow our new chums, but let none of the lads stray about. Leave a strong watch with the boats. Keep your arms by you, but look out, and no rows with these fellows. When you've rested the boys, send a crew in one of the boats aboard the brigantine, and tell Mr. Davies how the affair has turned out, and that he must bring the craft nearer in shore, but keep all hands alive and ready; d'ye hear, Harding?"

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the tar; and Captain Harry Grasper then followed the party who had entered the house.

Morning soon dawned upon the village, but ere the sun crept over the brow of the high mountain what strange revelations had been made. All the mysteries connected with each other's movements had to be explained. After a few brief words to Behring, Aungua

had retired with Domea to have a long conversation alone, leaving the chief now unmasked with Grasper and Momien.

The interview of the lovers was happy and it was sad. All about Aungua's strange capture, confinement in Shoodagon, and release by the captain was told in a few sentences, interrupted by many alternate sobs and smiles of Domea; and then his entry into the village. Domea had also to tell the sad details of her father's death; of her abduction, and all her hopes, and fears, and sadness whilst away from Aungua. Aungua then led her into the chief's apartment. Domea's first act was to approach Grasper, and pour out her hearty thanks for his help to Aungua. Now the bold captain much disliked receiving thanks, and had Domea been a man, she would have been checked somewhat in this manner—"Hang the fellow! clew up, clew up!" but Grasper, though rough, was not ignorant, and therefore swallowed his impatience, and muttered some reply about turning up all hands for a chum!

Aungua then turned to Domea saying, "This is my true friend, Behring, dear Domea; he about whom I have so often spoken to you and good father Momien."

At the name of Domea, had those present gazed at the captain, they would have seen a strange flush of mingled wonder, doubt, and horror cross his face; but none saw it, and with great confusion of manner, he spluttered out something about seeing after "the lads," and left the room before any could divine his purpose.

His departure led the conversation to the bold smuggler, and now Behring and Aungua mutually explained their appearance at this village; but Behring was remarkably reserved, seeing which, Momien adroitly left with Domea, thus leaving the friends alone. Throwing off all restraint, the chief then said: "Aungua, dear friend, I must explain much to you. This mask of mine surprises you."

"It does, indeed," replied Aungua. "The 'Tiger of Yumadong' I have heard much of, but, Behring, how comes it to be you?"

"Listen, Aungua," he replied. "When we first met it was in battle, you fighting for your Boa and I to defend my native home. You won, but nobly saved me from ruin, and the gods have made us true friends; but, Aungua, think you my spirit can brook being under a yoke, a tyrant's yoke? No! not whilst this arm can wield a spear to save my country. To do that, I live. As the Tiger of Yumadong I draw

brave spirits around me, and when the day comes, Burmah shall be chased from Arracan. Can you blame me, Aungua? Would you not do the same?"

Aungua could not blame the patriot, and replied: "This land is yours, Behring, and though Burmah is my native land, am I not an outlaw? Like you, I could not brook slavery."

"More than this, Aungua," the chief continued: "Arracan's throne shall be mine. Think you, I will fight and toil to set our cowardly monarch more firmly on her throne? No; I say no, Aungua! If the Tiger hurls the yoke from this land, none but the Tiger shall mount the throne!"

The chief and Aungua paused for some seconds: "Behring, however my Christian spirit likes not all the means which you employ to attain your best object," said Aungua, "I say, go on and win freedom for your native land; but let it be by means in harmony with your noble spirit. But, Behring, high places are dangerous. In seeking the throne of Arracan, do you not place a selfish motive higher than a noble patriotism? Beware of that, Behring!"

The chieftain gave a merry laugh, and clapping Aungua on the shoulder, cried: "With you, Aungua,

and with those you love, the Tiger of Yumadong will be a faithful friend. Leave me to my plans. Here you must remain some days, and my followers shall protect you from every foe; and if the proud, black-hearted Munris of Prome should dare cross my mountain-pass to molest you, he shall see the Tiger's teeth and feel his claws."



## CHAPTER VII.

## KOONAH'S END.

HOWEVER unwilling the reader may be to leave the reunited friends, we must hasten from this scene of stirring events to Ummerapoora, the grand capital of Burmah. Some great event must verily be the cause of such gatherings of people. The sun shines down upon a gay scene. The natives in holiday-dress swarm the wide streets in high glee, whilst warriors, mounted and on foot, hurry here and there, and music fills the air with rude melodies. Horses richly caparisoned are prancing as if imbued with the same spirit of gaiety. Elephants, grandly harnessed, are conducted by their wealthy riders, who, sitting behind the ears of the huge animals, are both rider and guide. By far the greatest numbers of males and females are gathered around a large circular green stretching before a pretty temple, and surrounded by many tents for spectators. On this green, now, many groups chat and smoke. The Bur-

man on a holiday seems to forget all past grievances and tyrannous conduct of his monarch. The creature of to-day, he forgets the past, and thinks not of the future. Bright banners are waving in the gentle breeze, and thousands of palm-leaf umbrellas reflect back the hot beams of the sun. Pressing through the merry crowds, and hurrying away towards the magnificent palace of Shembuan, glistening in the noonday rays, and noticing the lofty spire indicating the presence of royalty, let us enter a teak dwelling of the wealthiest class. All are built in a similar style; but this one is fitted up in a superb manner, and in one of its apartments, large and cool, opening with a shady balcony, which overlooks the river, two individuals are engaged in conversation. Seated on a low couch, which is close to the open window or door, and enjoying the sweet sight beyond, we recognise Maulong and the wife of old Monchaboo, his deceased brother.

Through the balcony are wafted the sounds from the noisy people in the streets, and the merry strains of music. Both Maulong and his sister-in-law are smoking, and occasionally enjoying some large green bananas, and other fruits indigenous to the country. This dwelling is the property of Monchaboo's

wife. Impelled by her intense love of pleasure and vanity, she has left the quiet retirement of Kemmendine for the gayer scenes of the capital, and on this occasion the nobles of Burmah are assembled at the Emperor's command for the celebration of some ceremony, the prospect of which fills the people with so much hilarity. Laying aside her half-finished cigar, the richly dressed female bursts into a merry peal of laughter, and when that had somewhat subsided she thus addressed Maulong :

"To-day will be a gay one, my Lord Maulong. Even this city grows dull and sleepy betimes ; but now, praise be to Guadama, this coming event will pour fresh life into our sluggish veins. Will the white Elephant be there ? Oh ! how I should like to guide him. Will the Boa be there, Maulong ?" Again she laughed, and her large black eyes twinkled ; and her young and pleasing face was radiant with smiles at the anticipation of some gay scene near at hand.

Slowly and stately did the Maywoon reply—  
"It will be a gay scene, sister ; but praise not Guadama, for he likes not lives to be destroyed."

"So some say, brother," she replied ; "but do not Guadama's priests say we need not be so

strict ? Besides, brother, no Damarthal shall hinder me from enjoying the sweets of life ; and will you not gratify your revenge and appease your insulted pride, because Guadama forbids ?”

“In truth, yes, sister,” replied Maulong, who, like her, possessed but little real regard for the scriptures of his religion. “The dignity of our family,” he continued, “has received a great blow from this vile wretch ; but to-day shall see the stain wiped out.”

“But the Boa and the Elephant, brother !”

“Ah, the sacred beast will be there, I am told ; but little is known at present. It is a grand occasion, and it is but meet that the holy priest shall be revenged by the holy animal.”

“I am thinking, now,” said the lady, jumping to another subject, “of what has become of that silly child, Domea. Keep her in my house I would not, and brother Symoo wished her to enter the nunnery ; but things have changed, and she has disappeared with her companions. A happy thing it is, for now. I am unlogged.”

“Ah !” replied Maulong, musingly ; “ah, had brother Monchaboo been as firm as I am, all this would have been prevented. I would have slain her before being so disgraced. A low-born, homeless

warrior to aspire to a merchant's daughter ; and one related to a Maywoon of Burmah and to the Seredan ! She willingly to chose him, and be guided by that old renegade ! I would have done as our former Boa did. I would have tied them in sacks, and sunk them together in the river before being so degraded."

"And so would I, good Maulong," replied the lady, coolly eating some fruit, "so would I ; but Monchaboo was weak. The child had sometimes great power over him. Well, let her go with her companions. You have not yet told me, brother, of your success with your daughter."

"Ah, sister," he replied, "had Monchaboo acted as I have done, our pride would not be so wounded. The husband of my choice did not please her ; but I was strict, and punished her for her disobedience, and then, without delay, completed the marriage."

"And how have you prospered with the Boa ?"

"Well, my sister, well," replied he. "Reaching him before Munris, I made him aware that the stranger's ship would be off the Arracan coast ; and in return for my information, the Boa will exalt me far above my present rank, and then shall I be more gratified."

"Proud, proud Maulong," answered the lady, in a playful, coquettish manner, "your talents will carry you to yet higher positions; but I care not to be high, only let me have wealth to gain pleasure. Life is short, and I shall gather all its honey whilst I can. But, brother, how came it that Munris led the troops to Arracan?"

"I know not," replied the Maywoon. "He arrived at the palace soon after I came, and prevailed upon the Boa; and soon left, at the head of a powerful band of warriors on fleet horses, making direct for the pass."

"But, Maulong, had you gone, would not your honour have increased?"

"Nay, sister; I might have fallen by an arrow, or be killed, and how then could I enjoy my high rank as I now do? Besides, if Munris returns without success, our Boa will degrade him, and strip him of all his honours and wealth. I care not to run such risks!"

"You are wise, Maulong," the lady answered; "and now I will tell you of something new. I intend to be married again!"

Maulong turned to the speaker, but his astonished

look was met by her merry smile, as she continued—  
“You are astonished; but it depends upon you whom I marry!”

“What mean you, sister?” asked Maulong.

“I mean, brother, that I shall be married. I want not high ranks, unless they yield me more pleasure. I see they can do so, but you must help me to step up.”

“Sister, I am puzzled. Tell me more plainly how am I to help you?”

“Well, Maulong, I have set my heart upon Munris, the great Maywoon of Prome!”

The viceroy was even more amazed; but the bold speaking lady watched his surprised countenance with much merriment, and then said—“Are you wondering, brother, because I wish to be higher in the world?”

“No, sister,” he answered; “I am in truth pleased, but at first you amazed me. But how am I to help you? Munris is self-willed.”

“I care not for that, brother. Your part must be to speak to him in a wise manner. You can do much, and I will accomplish the rest. He shall be my husband, for I want wider fields to gather honey from. But, brother, we can talk more of this at

other times ; but now is it not approaching the time for the grand sport ?”

“ Yes, sister ; and from the noises, the people must be gathering in great numbers.”

As he spoke, Maulong stepped out into the balcony, followed by the lady, who was dressed in strict Burmese fashion, and with a splendid silk taming. Overlooking the trees and shrubs in the garden, from their raised position they saw, away to the left, the cleared space and waving banners before noticed, and heard the music and the shouts coming from the joyful natives.

It is time to be away and witness this gathering, leaving Maulong and his hostess to follow in greater pomp and state. Reaching the large circular space, we find a considerable improvement made in the surrounding booths. One of great size, and dome-shaped, is splendidly decorated with gilding and white paint, being prepared for the royal spectators ; four slender pillars supporting a rich awning in front. To describe the gay banners and gaudy decorations is difficult and unnecessary. A great confusion from the people crowding the place arises as the soldiers endeavour to make a clearance. Soon the green is cleared, and the spectators begin to pour into the



booths. Parties of higher ranks occupy those nearer the royal resting-place. Some arrive on foot, attended by many servants; some come on horses, richly caparisoned; and not a few are borne hither on elephants. The spaces between the booths are filled with the common orders of the people, eager for the amusement. Music enlivens the day, and soon the news spreads that the Boa is coming. With great splendour the royal cavalcade advances, under the protection of a strong guard of the Emperor's "Invincibles!"

Borne in a magnificent palanquin, the mighty Shembuan is veiled from the gaze of his people, who humbly bend as the gorgeous procession sweeps on. Next comes a White Elephant; truly a splendid animal, and covered with a rich network of gold. The people bow as humbly before this sacred animal as before their monarch. Again, behind the huge, lordly beast are elephant-mounted princes and the various officers of state, clad in long sweeping robes of satin and velvet, covered with flowing mantles, and wearing high caps of velvet, decorated with flowers of gold. Behind each dignitary are borne their rich betel-nut boxes, the shape of which, with their umbrellas, horse-

trappings, distinguishing chains, and personal ornaments, tell the person's rank.

On sweeps the cavalcade, the rear brought up by more warriors; and amid clashings of music and applause of the multitudes, the nobles enter their respective booths. Standing in the centre of this huge arena, and beholding the glittering assembly around, we may well be surprised that a people so rude can display such grandeur. The emperor we behold not. Seated on a throne, and encased by a rich screen of gilded lattice, he looks out at the scene before him, but is himself unseen. On all sides we behold the gay turbans and dark skins of the men, with the, sometimes, yellow-powdered faces, decorated heads, and blackened eyebrows and teeth of the ladies. All their personal decorations the natives have brought forth to-day; and as the bright sun beams upon this grand spectacle, it would lead a western observer to imagine he beheld a glittering tournament of days gone by.

The amusements soon commenced. Men wrestled, and fought, and raced, to the great delight of the spectators, who betted largely on their favourites in the arena.

Buffoons and tumblers in strange costumes, and

dancing women then lent their attractions. Many such like sports beguiled the time, until, wearied and wanting change, the Boa signified his desire to his attendants. With great rapidity the arena was once more cleared, and now in front of the Boa's booth is seen a deep but narrow pit, with the earth filled up on one side. Welcomed with rending shouts, the huge "White Elephant" is walked around the arena in a slow and solemn manner, the people bending humbly as the sacred beast passed. Returned to its place at the Boa's booth, fresh shouts from the multitude now usher in a body of warriors, leading a native, almost destitute of clothing, and with his hands firmly bound behind his back.

At the appearance of this being, whom, with difficulty we recognise to be the assassin priest, Koonah, the people's shouts die away in a deep murmur and hissing of rage. Koonah is a picture of wretchedness and misery. Hunger and tortures of diabolical kinds have made his tall form emaciated and weak. His eyes, deep sunk in his hollow face, have lost their fire and daring. His cheeks are thin and branded with hot irons, and his body in parts bruised with torture; but withal, at times, the old spirit, dying away but not yet dead, breaks forth, and

Koonah glares around on the enraged multitude gathered to witness his doom. What that is he knows not, and he cares not, if it be speedy. Sentenced to torture and death as the assassin of the Seredan of Burmah, he knows nothing now can save him; and as he is made to walk around the arena before the spectators, he recalls in his own mind his deeds of revenge. Fearfully has he fulfilled his heart's desire, and sacrificed all to the idol of his heart, and these recollections make him glare around him, and tread more boldly. But, ah! the bold spirit was flickering, the glance again quailed before the frowning faces of thousands of his countrymen exulting in his fate: Koonah, weak and dispirited, faltered, but the sharp spears of his tormentors behind gave him no peace, but urged him onward and around the living circle.

The round was now completed, the multitudes checked their murmurs, and the music ceased. Without speaking a word, or uttering a groan, Koonah was led unresistingly, and amid a deep silence, with the eyes of all fixed on him, to the deep hole before noticed. Without ceremony, the guards here seized the victim, and forced him into the narrow upright grave, and in spite of his struggles the earth was heaped in and pressed down, burying him to his neck, but leaving

his head exposed above the ground. The expression of the wretched man's face once seen could never be forgotten. Motionless and with his head and neck only above the surface, he knew his fate, and saw in front of him the merry faces in the Boa's booth, and heard the loud cries of delight and the crashing bursts of music, as the white Elephant was again led round the arena.

Once more the sacred animal paused before the Emperor, and the shouts and the music subsided into a dead and awful silence. A signal was given, the guards had retired, and the beholding thousands saw the stately beast marching slowly, guided by its native rider, towards the buried victim, whose face expressed unutterable horror. Slowly the Elephant neared the buried assassin, and then facing the royal spectators, at a motion from the driver the huge beast stopped, and lifting one of his gigantic feet, held it suspended over the doomed man's head. One second of awful suspense, one loud piercing yell of agony, and the ponderous foot descended, crushing Koonah's head, like a snail beneath a falling rock.

Simultaneous with a deep roar of thunder from the sacred Elephant, which had thus revenged the High Priest's murder, a rolling shout from the multitude,

like the sounding of a mighty cascade of water, mingled with the deafening crash of music, seemed to shake the ground on which they stood, as if the yawning gulf of the bottomless pit had opened, and all the evil spirits held jubilee ; and the doomed souls in hell gave welcome to another lost one !

This dark tragedy over, and the earth heaped upon the assassin's grave, the great company broke up. With royal pomp the cavalcade again formed and returned to the palace, whilst the people finished the day with sports so delightful to them.

A scene so horrible as Konah's end may well fill us with solemn thoughts, and draw us to a brief contemplation and a comparison of the characters of the assassin and the assassinated. No character of a like stamp can be so detestable as Konah's. In all we have found him an evil plotter, and giving way to the worst and most demonlike passions which can enslave the human heart. Tracing his career through the various scenes in which he has figured, we find him first with a passion for gain ; but revenge comes in to sweep away this love, and fill his heart with an idol which misery and blood alone can satisfy.

How different is this character from the Seredan's. A better natural heart, more loving nature, or a nobler mind could not, under the like circum-

stances, be found. With a zeal for his religion to bend all his powers in adoration, this idolater nevertheless, although misguided and running in a wrong channel, obeyed its precepts as far as mortal could.

All means with him were lawful, if they brought converts to his religion, or wealth to its shrine. The high priest and the priest, how different in character, and how diverse were the ruling passions of their lives !

But now to turn to others with whom we have become acquainted. In them we also find, although differently developed, ruling passions, all-absorbing objects, to gratify and attain which they live. The most prominent of these, we find, was Domea's father, the old merchant of Kemmendine, the natural love for his daughter still lingering in his heart, and battling there with his intense desire for dignity and position ; and, alas, we have seen which conquered, which owned the greatest sway over the heart and mind of Monchaboo. Close behind this character we behold, strongly marked, the character of his wife, with whom pleasure was the all-occupying theme ; and side by side with her we may place the merchant's brother, Maulong, who bows servilely to pride.

These we have found the ruling passions of their lives; and still further in the background we descry the mighty Boa of Burmah, Shembuan Minderagee himself. Little as we have seen of him in his successful attempt to wrest the crown from the tyrannous Chengzuan, and in his repeated attacks on the Siamese dominions, it is sufficient to unveil the grand object of his life, the desire of dominion and power. Passing on, in the far-off distance, and almost lost to view, we discern, though feebly, the character of that simple-minded priest, Guhlinugah. Few are the scenes in which he has appeared, but we may descry a love of ease and luxury as the chief affection reigning in his heart.

In these few characters we see, forcibly repeated, the grand truth, that even as men in life have their besetting sins, to which they more readily yield, so we find, amid the many and the varied affections and desires of the human heart, one chief and ruling passion and object tinging their whole lives and moulding their characters.

The death of Konah, the shattering of his life-idol, the dark termination of his dark, sinful career, may well lead us to solemn thoughts; when we remember, that he died thinking only to endure hell torments for a little season, and



then.. return to earth in despised forms, to have ample opportunities of redeeming past evils and climbing to heaven. We know this to be a strong delusion and a lie, for the soul who knows not the atoning power of the Son of God's shedded blood, can never, never be "translated into the happy kingdom of God's dear Son."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MOUNTAIN NEST.

"STRAND me, if I'm not among breakers again. Squalls seem brewing on every quarter ; ahead, on my beam, and astern. I thought that precious old money-grubbing darky was under hatches snug enough, and now I've run a-foul of his daughter ! She must be the same ! This will break chums, I guess, if they smell a rat, and I like the lad, too ; and the lass is a brave little thing. Well, what is to be will be, I suppose ; but I'm not caught napping, anyhow. The precious old Boa and his wasps I fancy will be buzzing about my ears afore long, when they hear I'm about. I'll get aboard and make all taut for dirty weather."

Captain Grasper was troubled, as he muttered this in a low tone, and hurriedly left the chieftain's house. A scene forgotten, until now recalled by the mention of Domea's name, rose before his mind. The old merchant's treasure-chamber ; the night attack ; the

appearance of the old man, and his struggles with Grasper, he now distinctly remembered. The fatal blow, and the merchant's last cry of "Domea, Domea! come to me, Domea!" rang in the smuggler's ears with a strange clearness. He had not the slightest doubt but this Domea was the same for whom his victim cried; but why he believed so he could not tell. At the first rush of feeling he felt convinced she was the same; but as he hastened away from the dwelling, and became more composed, he said, in the same soliloquizing undertone, "Some of my head timbers stove in, I reckon. More lasses with the same name, eh? dozens in the same village. That rogue of a priest, Koonah, never said the old man and the lass were relatives, or that Aungua had anything to do with the old sinner. Well, at all events I'll get my lads in hand and everything snug. It may be or may not. I'll sound them, and see if they smell a shark; if not, all's well; but if they do sniff powder, well then I'm off, and they'll lose a chum. I don't think, though, Aungua will split up for such an old rogue; his time was come, and he ought to have been sound asleep."

Such was the substance of Grasper's thoughts and mutterings; and determined not to be the first to fall

out, he strolled out of the village to the spot where his boats were moored. Most of the hands were on the bank, and they at once saluted their captain and gathered around him.

Strangely enough, it had never once entered the thoughts of Momien or Aungua that the captain was in the remotest degree connected with the murder of Monchaboo, or the robbery of his goods. The coincidence of Aungua being captured by Grasper on the very fatal night, did not even strike them as strange. Aungua had noticed the priest being at his capture; but there could be no connexion between him and the outrage. Bad as both Christians had found the priests to be, they never once felt a suspicion that they could be guilty of such deeds. Had Grasper been a stranger to them, then many little incidents might have drawn their suspicions towards him; but he had proved himself a brave, kind, and generous friend. This, above all things, prevented any thoughts of his being the perpetrator of that midnight murder from entering their minds. He had managed so far to keep his true character unrevealed to them, and an armed vessel, and one, too, that committed ravages upon other nations, was nothing unusual to the Burmese.

How remarkable that this is so in real life ! One little link only is wanting to complete a chain of evidence, and that link, from its very simplicity, not noticed. When the captain left the apartment so hurriedly, it caused no surprise in the others ; and after Grasper had looked after "the lads" he returned to the village, intending to find out all he could respecting Domea's relation to the old merchant, and if they had any suspicions about himself.

This, reader, we also know is an important thing, for with our knowledge of events, should the bond of friendship between Grasper and our Christian friends be rudely sundered, how can they escape, as the enraged Munris is now making all speed for the mountain pass ? If no suspicions enter their minds, there are few chances of the secret being unravelled. The Seredan and Koonah are both dead, and so far all communication with Burmah is checked. The viceroy knows the secret, it is true, but the Arracan warriors who accompanied the army, true to their national hatred of the Burmese, had kept aloof and departed for their homes before the trial of the priest was terminated. They saw the gathering of the warriors, and also the prisoner, but knew not who he was or of what he was guilty ; hence the rival Munris

alone can unravel the mystery. These things, of course, Grasper was ignorant of, and he sought an opportunity of speaking with Aungua.

Such an opportunity was not long in presenting itself. Before the day had passed matters were more settled, and Behring had expressed his wish for the whole party to remain at his village many days. This pleased all hands. Momien would then be restored to better health and strength ; and Captain Grasper, acting up to the chieftain's wish, sent orders for the brigantine at flood-tide to drop down to the entrance of the river, and the greater part of the crew to be sent up to the village, also the doctor to come.

By this time the greatest friendship had sprung up between the smugglers and the villagers, and all went merry as a marriage bell. The sailors had doffed the dress they usually wore on times of their expeditions, and now appeared attired neatly in striped shirts, with large open collars, white canvas trousers, and tarpaulin hats, with the *Saucy Jane*, in man-of-war fashion, painted thereon. The captain, too, was less ferocious in appearance and dress, but still had regular watches kept over his boats, and weapons carefully stored in a village hut, appropriated to the use of the men.

The canoes of the village made long journeys to the vessel of the strangers, and the *Saucy Jane* caused much wonder and admiration, but a strong crew always remained on board. Neither in all this unusual stir was Aungua's noble horse neglected. Spared from the race in which, no doubt, his strength and fleetness would have been nobly shown forth, he now received every attention, and Domea especially took a great liking to the splendid animal.

These matters somewhat arranged, Grasper found an opportunity of drawing Aungua away from Domea's side, and no little difficulty this proved at first; but she soon yielded her lover for the time to their brawny friend of the ocean.

Captain Grasper led his young friend away towards the rear of the village; and passing through the postern, they walked a few paces up the wild mountain path, whilst to their left the waters of the river could be heard rushing by. After a few ordinary remarks, the captain said, "Well, and how long must we be at anchor here?"

"Several days, I think, captain," replied Aungua. "We may never see Behring again; and besides, there are many little things to arrange."

"So there are, Aungua," said Grasper; "and I

have some little repairs to do to my craft before we sail for good. But now my doctor is ashore, your old friend will soon be taut again and in sea trim." Grasper paused a few seconds, and then continued: "You've never yet told me, Aungua, who your lassie is, nor where she hails from."

"I could have had no reason, captain, in keeping anything from you. In the hurry and bustle of past events, I thought not of doing so. Domea's home was in Kemmendine—you know the place."

Aungua smiled, and Grasper laughed as he replied, "Strand me, that was a lucky wind for you that blew me there."

"Yes, captain, it was indeed strangely fortunate. But to return to my story. Domea's mother has been dead many years, and her father was a merchant and magistrate of Kemmendine. But I have told you something of this before, have I not?"

"No, Aungua," replied Grasper; "you did say something, too, about her father being cruel, and about that precious rival of yours, but not who the old man was. Why does he not help his daughter, and make things comfortable?"

"Ah, captain, the old man is dead."



"Dead ! well that's a pauler too," said Grasper, apparently surprised ; "but how came that about ?"

"Well, I scarcely know," replied Aungua. "I am told that on the very night you captured me, his house was attacked, and in defending his property the poor old man was murdered."

Grasper whistled as was his custom in expressing surprise, and said :—"That's sad for the poor lassie, Aungua. And who did the deed ?"

"That cannot be discovered," Aungua replied. "No trace can be found ; but it must have been a band of jungle robbers."

Both now remained for some time, and then the captain, looking at his companion full in the face, said : "It strikes me, lad, I can put you on the scent of one of them at least."

It was Aungua's turn to be astonished now, and he would have spoken, but the smuggler continued—"Stop a bit, Aungua. Do you remember that pongee who was with me on the night I kidnapped you ?"

"Yes," answered Aungua, listening with eagerness.

"Well," continued the captain, "after I went back with some of my crew to fetch something we left in the wood, the priest went away towards the

village, and I took you aboard. When he came aboard after he was kicked out of the priesthood, he said it was for doing something trifling ; but I now remember, after you left my craft to hunt out your friends, the rogue told me on parting, that it was for robbing an old merchant at Kemmendine on the very night he left me there ; that caused him to be kicked out. I never once thought of this, but it strikes me, Aungua, it clears up the matter. What think you ?”

This was a close shave ; but Grasper knew what he was about, and Aungua, astonished at this disclosure, now remembered the conversation he had overheard in the dungeon of Shoodagon, which confirmed the captain’s statement. He explained this to Grasper, and they continued conversing on the same topic, Grasper cunningly dropping his ideas until Aungua felt convinced that Koonah was the cause of Monchaboo’s murder, and he was eager to return with this intelligence to the others ; but Grasper said, “ Hold a moment, Aungua ; before we start, I ought to get fresh water and an extra stock of provisions aboard ; will you manage this with the governor ?”

“ Yes, captain, I will do it all ; and now let us return.”

To the village then they retraced their steps, and whilst Grasper went to see to his crew again, Aungua unfolded all he had heard from him to Momien and Domea.

After this, Captain Grasper was often asked to repeat what he had said, and this he readily did, and the result was, that not a shadow of a suspicion rested on him ; but Koonah was condemned as the murderer. Things now shone clear again. This pebble removed, the stream flowed gaily along. The village contained more mountaineers than before, but all wore a peaceable aspect, and Behring went not once on the mountains, although his under chiefs scoured the forest, and watched the passes to levy their black-mail as before. Aungua and Domea had repeated and re-repeated everything connected with each other, and lived in continual sunshine. Old Momien rapidly regaining strength, looked cheerful, and Loo, as merry as could be, skipped here and there, flirting with mountaineers and smugglers, who were highly amused at her outlandish talk, not much of which could they reply to.

The *Saucy Jane*, too, seemed to share in the joyous times. Many excursions were made to her by the

villagers who were conveying provisions and water on board, assisted by the tars. Aungua and Domea in Grasper's boat had also taken a trip on board, and even Behring must see the captain's ship—his ocean bride ; and mightily proud was Grasper to show them over his craft. The seamen also took good care to improve the occasion and stretch their limbs on land. Work was not forgotten though, and the tars were sometimes busy in making the brigantine taut for sea. Thus things went on, and an event occurred which was a happy one for our lovers. They were united in the sacred bonds of marriage. Little or no ceremony was used, as it was not Burmese custom so to do. The mere act of asking on the part of the bridegroom, and the consent of the father being all that is comprised in the marriage ceremony ; not even a note of music being sounded. True to national usage the marriage of Aungua and Domea was in all simplicity ; but Momien added to it, before the assembled witnesses, Grasper being one, readings from the bible of all that related to the solemnity of marriage, and a prayer, invoking blessing on the united pair.

They were married, but their hearts had long been

wedded in the purest and truest union. Both Aungua and Domea saw more than a mere temporal union ; they saw the uniting of heart and mind ; a mingling as it were of their souls to make them helpmeets and companions on the journey of life. The love they had for each other was of that blessed holy birth, self-denying, self-forgetting, true as the star and pure as light, which is sometimes found seeking a home in human hearts ; but, alas ! how often hands are joined whilst in the heart no such love can be found, the mingling of which alone constitutes true marriage. In the hearts of Aungua and Domea love nestled.

Five days had now passed, and busy days they were. Much had been done, but much more remained to be done. The brigantine had been undergoing some important repairs, which would yet occupy some days, and the mate, ever active, was keeping the crew from getting idle, by washing and scrubbing the craft inside and out ; and the water and provisions had yet to be got on board. Behring seemed unwilling to let his friends go for some days yet, and no great haste was made. Towards the close of the fifth day, some of the mountaineers brought Behring intelligence that

their comrades, who had been with the Boa's army, were returning, and were even near at hand.

The news spread through the village with great speed, and men, women, and children flocking out to the river side, had not long to wait before the little band came in sight. Hearty indeed was the shout of welcome, and the return shout of joy from the comers; and the smugglers, infected with a like spirit, gave a hearty cheer. Some of the villagers hurried across the river to meet their relations and companions, whilst Behring, Momien, Grasper, Aungua, and Domea, with others, stood in a group near the river's bank waiting their approach. In a very short time the new comers, tired with their rapid marches—and a band of noble-looking, strong men were they—crossed the river in the many canoes paddled by willing hands, and met their chief. Like brothers did Behring and his under-chiefs meet, and his first inquiry was for the men. Not one of the brave two hundred belonging to him had been lost, and he heard with pleasure of the total defeat of the Boa's army, and of his men not being actually engaged in that hated service. The other Arracanese had gone to their respective lords in different parts. By the

time these things were told, the warriors, hungry and tired, had entered the village, leaving Behring and the head officer of the band in deep conversation, whilst Grasper and the others strolled down the river's bank.

In a few minutes the chief hurriedly joined them, and communicated some intelligence which threw the party into no little consternation. They held a long and apparently a serious consultation, which ended in Grasper seizing Behring heartily by the hand, and exclaiming, "I'm in for one to have a slap at that fellow. Strand me, but my fingers itch to chalk a mark on his figure head. I'll be in after you in a brace of shakes." The others turned towards the villages, and Grasper walked to his men, and spoke a few words which seemed to stir them up to high spirits, and they at once stepped a mast in the smallest boat and prepared for starting. Within two hours after this occurrence there was a gathering of men on the green in front of the chief's dwelling. More than a score of mountaineers, fully armed and equipped, were leaning on their spears near a group of smugglers, twelve in number, being the strongest of the crew, dressed in their tight guernseys and close

caps, and heavily armed with muskets besides their small arms. Many others were gathered around. Soon Behring and Grasper came out ; spoke to their men, and ordered them to fall in, whilst Aungua and the others looked out from the verandah. Headed by the chief and the captain, the mountaineers and little band of tars moved briskly off towards the rear of the village. Harding was left to command the sailors, and Kala with the two hundred freshly arrived warriors to protect the village.

It was a long march over the wooded mountains ; but the patriots knew well the track. Instead of following the direction of the mountain spur, the party, after some distance, struck right across towards the mountain pass, distant full twenty miles. Over extensive ridges, through tangled forests, down into rich valleys, and fording two large streams, the party, after many weary miles, and by the time evening had deepened into night, were toiling up a rough, rocky hill. Where they were going the smugglers could not see, for the darkness was intense ; but still the mountaineers pressed on. They soon felt themselves threading their way through a dense forest, and by a very winding narrow path, until a plain before a huge



towering rocky eminence was reached. Pausing here, Behring blew a low note on his horn, and then led his band, with Grasper at his side, up a narrow path where only two could go abreast. Long before this, the hunters had mingled with the smugglers to guide them safely. The path now became a flight of steps roughly hewn in the rock, and then suddenly led into a small cavity piercing into the very heart of the eminence. Here some armed mountaineers were keeping guard, and saluted their chief, who passed in followed by the band ; the smugglers being heartily glad of their journey thus ended.

Continuing to traverse this narrow cavity or passage, they soon saw lights glimmering ahead, and on turning a corner found torches resting in projections of the rock, and several mountaineers, who gave the chief welcome. The passage widened and grew more lofty, the lights increased, and men became more numerous, until Grasper and his men beheld before them a cavern of gigantic size, the rocky roof supported by massive, roughly-shaped pillars, of the same material ; and from this cavern others of great size branched off on every hand. The whole was gaily lighted up with many torches, bringing parts out

into rich lights, and steeping others into darker shade.

In these vast caverns Grasper saw men in great numbers, and the walls glittering with arms. Behring stood at his side as the captain beheld this strange scene, and said with a smile, whilst pointing around with his glittering spear—

“This, bold captain, is my ‘Mountain Nest,’ and these four hundred and more of my brave followers. Here we are but a few miles from the pass, but I defy all attempts to search us out. We will remain here, and my scouts will bring news when any approach. And now, captain, welcome to the ‘Nest.’ Give our brave friends a welcome, my bold brothers.”

A shout from more than four hundred hunters’ tongues sounded like the booming of cannons through the caverns; but, nothing daunted by the sight of so many, the little band of smugglers gave a British cheer in return, and the mountaineers crowded around the strangers.

When a few hours had sped, a deep silence reigned through the “Nest.” Many of the torches were extinguished, and the mountaineers were stretched in sleep on piles of skins in groups over the floor. The smugglers lay around their commander, and the only

life to be seen was in the slowly moving form of a hunter, at various parts of the cavern, keeping guard, whilst in the passage leading to the "Nest," a strong guard was maintained night and day.

Morning broke over the mountains. The hunters in great numbers left the "Nest," but Behring and his visitors remained until near midday, when a scout came hurrying in.

"What news?" asked the chief, as his hunter entered the cavern.

"Whilst watching the pass, my chief," replied the man, "four warriors of Burmah, on tired steeds, came hurrying through the pass. We intended not to obstruct them, but one of the steeds, too tired to go further, fell, and the other warriors hastened on, leaving the fallen one to shift how he could. We seized him, and learnt that a large body of horsemen, led by the Maywoon of Prome, were coming with great speed up the mountains."

Waiting for no more, Behring put on his "Tiger skin Mask," and followed only by Grasper and his men, now quite refreshed, left the "Nest" and plunged into the forest. Often did his bugle sound loudly on those grand heights, and hunters joined

him continually at the summons. When they reached the pass they numbered enough to keep back an army. At Behring's command several trees were levelled and dragged to the narrowest part of the pass, and laid across, forming a formidable barrier, behind which the mountaineers and smugglers assembled. Scouts went down the Burmese side to watch the coming of the foe, who they knew must now be near at hand.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CONFLICT IN THE PASS.

THAT part of the mountain pass which Behring had barricaded with the low bulwark of trees, was slightly behind the huge rock standing at the bend of the road. To the left, this rock extended for many yards, forming a perpendicular wall, and the ravine yawning to the right suddenly encroached upon the road, and then abruptly ran off, almost at right angles, behind a towering height. The track now extended, rising over hills and falling into gentle slopes, in a zigzag manner between two hills, plunging at parts into low forest groups, until the bordering hills almost met, and the road disappeared in a narrow gorge. There the mountains rose into the air, shutting out all view beyond.

In full sight of the track from where it emerges from the gorge to the narrow part they had barricaded, the mountaineers lay in watch, Behring and

Grasper both leaning against the rock at their left. In Behring's hand was a long spear, and Grasper was leaning on a musket. Some remark made the two chiefs laugh—"How that old bear will growl," said Grasper, "when he finds a stopper put on his fun."

"Ah! ah!" laughed the "Tiger Mask;" "his orders were for me to watch the coast and seize your vessel should he not arrive in time, and then, bold captain, he would deliver you to the great Boa."

"The old sinner, I should like to come foul of him! Make a fine bonfire of me, I guess, if he caught me! Well, let that howling dog of a Maywoon come athwart my hawse, and I'll give him something by way of keepsake, or my name's not Harry Grasper! He'd treat a friend like this, would he, the black-hearted old dog?"

The captain was burning to be at the Maywoon and his troop, and he constantly sprang up on the barricade to scan the path.

"Captain," said Behring, in reply to his outburst, "I would have exulted to have been with you when you carried off the Boa's prey. Why did you not tell me this before we reached the Nest?"

"Well, you see, Behring," replied Captain Harry,

"our young chum, Aungua, steers rather closer to the wind than I do. I like him amazingly, and don't want to turn him against me, which I guess he'd do if he knew I played such tricks; and so I kept that yarn till there was no fear of his hearing it."

"You were wise, captain," answered Behring. And they continued talking on different things, but Grasper cunningly said nothing of his inroads on the vaults of Shoodagon beyond releasing Aungua, for he had found out that Behring believed in the same religion, although he had very little reverence for it.

The chief had just finished a relation of his first meeting with Aungua, telling Grasper that on the attack of Burmah upon his native land he had been captured, and but for Aungua's noble interference, and helping him to escape, he would have been put to death. After that Aungua had contrived to meet the chief, and a friendly feeling from that time existed between them.

As Behring finished this, a noise from the watchers directed his attention to the path up which the scouts were running with hot haste. As the foremost runner crossed the barricade, he gave the news of the Burmese coming.

"How many warriors have they?" asked the chief.

"Nearly a thousand, my chief, as well as I could number," replied the man.

The other scouts now came in with the same news of their being close upon the gorge. At a sign from the chief the men now arranged themselves, some retiring out of sight as a reserve, the others stringing their bows, whilst the little band of smugglers unslung their pieces. This was done with great rapidity, and the chief, turning to Grasper, said—

"Now, captain, you take your post at this rock, for I know the Maywoon will not risk tumbling into the ravine. None of my followers shall aim at him."

Grasper responded heartily, and bid his men not to pick down the man he should point out. And now, as still as death, the men all crouched behind the fallen trees, and distinctly heard the clattering of hoofs through the distant gorge. Over the low tree-tops now could be seen the spears and heads of men and horses rapidly advancing. They emerged from the nearest copse ; and the mountaineers saw a fine body of men, many hundreds, on small but strong horses, making for the pass at a hand gallop. At their head rode Munris of Prome, armed at all points, and surrounded by his chiefs. As they neared the pass, they saw the way obstructed by the fallen trees



but saw not the mountaineers behind, whose arrows were ready on the strings of their long bows.

On came the troop at full swing, and when within a few yards Munris reined back his steed with amazement, throwing the others in confusion, as at a loud, piercing, echoing blast from Behring's bugle, the men in ambush started to their feet, sending a thick flight of arrows at the troop.

Thrown into confusion at this strange reception, Munris soon perceived the armed men checking his advance to be few in number, and the barricade being low, he detached a band of his men to dash at the obstruction and leap the trees. Headed by an inferior chief, some fifty or more put their horses to a gallop, having their bows in hand. Steadily and without firing an arrow, the mountaineers waited their approach. With a loud yell, the Burmese rose in their saddles, and shot their arrows over the trees; and at once, with spears in hand and their bodies protected by their small shields, they dashed to the barricade. Within a few feet, the loud report of the smugglers' muskets was followed by the foremost horses and riders being hurled to the ground dead or wounded. At the same instant the bows twanged, and shot by strong arms the keen arrows did great mischief.

All now was confusion. Those behind, unable to rein up their steeds, fell over their prostrate comrades, and the Burmese leader's horse unhurt sprang for the leap. With one intention, Grasper and the Tiger chief leapt on to the topmost tree, their bodies in full view. One plunge of Behring's spear, one stroke of Grasper's cutlass, and the horse, with its rider, rolled over and over in agony, and fell heavily into the ravine.

Repulsed, the band rejoined the troop, which had now retreated to a safer distance, and Munris held a long conference with his officers. Maddened at this obstruction and repulse, and more so that his warriors had seen the stranger captain side by side with the renowned "Tiger of Yumadong," he now determined at all hazards to seize them both. Defeat now would be utter ruin on his return to Burmah, and victory make this the grandest day of his life. Besides this, was not the object of his passion to be gained? Ah! the daring Munris would wade through seas of blood, and over the bodies of all his men, rather than be thwarted in this. He was long deliberating what course to pursue, and perceived that there was little use of attacking the barricade with horsemen, as the pass was too narrow to allow many to ride abreast.

By this time, Behring and Grasper with their men were all in readiness, and in high spirits. A few scratches had been received, but in return they beheld the warriors and horses brought down by their fire. Closely watching the enemy, they saw a great number of men dismount and assemble for another attack, headed by the Maywoon himself. Grasper grinned with delight at this, and had the upper trees shifted until a narrow gap was made at the rock, sufficient for a body to pass through. They had not waited long, when a small body of horsemen advanced to cover the approach of the footmen, who numbered over five hundred men. The arrows now fell thick on both sides, and the smugglers loaded and fired with great rapidity, the shots telling with fearful effect. Still the daring Burmese advanced at a smart pace, and within only a few yards of the barricade the horses wheeled round, leaving room for those on foot to advance, who came with a bold dash. Munris was at their head, but not a shot or an arrow was winged at him. The mountaineers now laid aside their bows, and the smugglers poured in a last volley as the torrent rolled on.

The gap was spied as Grasper no doubt intended, and the human tide surged towards it. The barrier

was reached, and the Burmese assaying to mount, were met by the spears of the brave defenders. The fight now raged hotly. Grasper and his band kept the gap clear of all who attempted to enter, and as many as mounted the barricade were hurled back. The "Tiger Mask" encouraged his men, but still had no need of his reserve.

The fiercest of the fight was at the gap. Not contented with keeping the foe out, Grasper ordered his men to fire their pistols, and before the smoke cleared, he was through the gap and engaged hand to hand with the enemy. Sweep after sweep of his heavy cutlass drove the Burmese nearest him back ; and the smugglers following their chief (as many as could), and ranging around him, mowed down the assaulters with powerful cuts, while some, mounting the parapet, poured telling shots down upon the Burmese. Behind the narrow barricade, the mountaineers were successfully keeping back the foe ; and well could they have kept an army at bay. Captain Grasper with a cocked pistol in one hand, and backed by his men, was seeking to get near Munris, and loudly rang his cry of "One and all!" above the crash of weapons. As well might the Burmese have attacked a rock, as that band of sturdy smugglers,

who were battling now with clenched teeth against such odds; but the pass allowed only a few to advance at a time.

Maintaining his ground, but without advancing, Grasper soon caught the eye of Munris, who attacked him in company with some of his officers. At first, the captain had his work, in guarding their blows, but soon rained down his terrific cuts, rolling many in death before him. Munris kept his ground as well as he could, guarding himself with his target, and Grasper, with a grin playing around his mouth, was constantly giving him smarting wounds; and then seeing the dangers increasing, he brought down his cutlass with great power, rendering the May-woon's shield useless, and gashing his cheeks frightfully. The cutlass was raised again, but the blow arrested, as an arrow aimed at his breast, by a warrior very near, pierced his left arm. Maddened with this, the captain forgot Munris, and turning to the warrior, shot him dead. The viceroy, mad with pain, saw his opportunity, and made a plunge at the captain, which would have been fatal, had not a smuggler shielded his commander by parrying the thrust. All this was done in a few brief seconds, and Grasper turning to his foe again, in great rage aimed a blow with all

the force he could throw into his arm; the heavy blade descended, broke down the Maywoon's guard, and crashing through his skull and brains, clove him to the chin.

In the consternation and confusion which followed the fall of the Burmese chief, Grasper and his band retreated through the gap, dragging their wounded with them. Behring, who was high up on the barricade, saw the death of Munris, and sounding his bugle above the shouts and yells and din of the conflict, sprang over upon the enemy. The mountaineers followed their chief, and the reserve coming in, the Burmese were entirely routed, leaving many of their number dead, dying, and wounded.

The mountaineers now returned. Several of their men were wounded, some killed. Two of the smugglers were also dead, and all more or less wounded. Behring approached the captain, saying—"They will not require much more of this. You killed the Maywoon, but they may try again."

Just as he ceased speaking, one of his men came hurriedly up, and whispered something to him. He turned at once to Grasper, and said—"Brave captain, my follower tells me that the three warriors they allowed to pass unmolested have roused the Burmese

garrisons on the plain. Their intention must be to launch canoes to attack your ship, or fetch their war-boats, now several miles up the coast. I shall have them coming to meet the Maywoon before the day closes."

"I'd better 'bout ship, then," Grasper replied, "and back to my craft, Behring. Now I've settled the Maywoon, I feel easier inside ; but my arm smarts terribly from that arrow."

"Yes, captain, you go back. I will keep them at bay until a sufficient time, and then withdraw my men into the wood, and let the warriors pass, if they like. You will then be on board and safe. I will send guides with you to show the nearest way to the coast, and also a vehicle to carry you there with greater speed."

The captain thanked Behring heartily, and the chief then selected some of his followers, to whom he said, "Conduct the captain and his men to the bay, but when you reach the plain find some conveyance, and take them with all speed. Then return to the village, and bid Kala make all preparations for receiving the Boa's warriors as dutiful subjects should do. Away and hasten !"

Grasper and the chief now spoke long together, and

parted with mutual wishes for one another's success, and perhaps never more to meet. The sailors took leave of their mountain friends, and the captain, coming back for the last time, said to the chief, "Don't forget, Behring, to bury my poor lads decently. No burning, you know. Bury them."

"I promise you, brave captain," replied Behring; "and when next you visit Arracan may all these tyrants be swept from the land, and freedom make our homes happy."

Again they parted: Grasper to rejoin his craft, and Behring to keep the Burmese at bay until he felt the captain was safe. Nobly did he do this. For nearly two hours he defied all the attempts of the Burmese, led by the chief commanding under the Maywoon, to cross the barricade. Various schemes did they try, and terrific assaults did they make; but a handful of faithful men might defy hundreds, ay, thousands in that pass. Behring remained on the defence, but dismissed several of his men. At length information was brought to him of a body of Burmese advancing towards the pass from the Arracan side, no doubt in wonder at the delay of the Maywoon's troop. On hearing this, the brave patriot withdrew his men, who dispersed into the forests. Unopposed, the Burmese



now passed the scene of fierce contest, where so many had fallen ; but as they hurried through the forest, keeping on the alert, not a foe did they see, or hear a sound to betoken their presence.

By this time matters had rapidly progressed in the village. After the departure of the patriot chief and Grasper, the smart boatswain, Harding, had mustered his men, and despatched a light canoe off to the brigantine with the captain's orders. All now was bustle and work in the village. Kala, in obedience to his chief's wishes, sent away all the things intended for the voyage, and by sunset our friends, Aungua, Domea, Momien, and Loo, seated in the lugger, and accompanied by Kala with some of his canoes, took a last look of the mountain village, and saddened at the probability of never again meeting the noble-hearted patriot, they sailed down the broad river over which the evening mists were rapidly falling.

It was an exciting time for them, like outcasts from their native land, compelled to become exiles in a strange clime. Behring, too, with the long struggle for freedom before him, now nobly checking their pursuers to give them time to escape, who shall tell them, when they reach their new home, of his future career,

whether by victory exalted to honour, or hurled by defeat to ruin, perhaps an ignominious death !

For some considerable time all were silent save the smugglers, who conversed of their comrades in the mountain pass. They felt uneasy at their captain's absence at such stirring times. Soon one and then another spoke, and the fresh breeze and rushing of the water, as the lugger under her large sails dashed along, raised their spirits. Domea, naturally thinking of her father and her childhood's home, pressed nearer to Aungua, and knew all she held now dear to her were with her in the boat. It was a pleasing sight, and a picturesque one, the large lugger with her expansive sails bellying out before the fresh breeze, and tossing the tiny waves scornfully from her sharp bows. In her bows the crew were gathered, a motley group. In her waist our friends and Kala were now chatting of varied events, and Harding, at the tiller astern, had the merry maid, Loo, near him, with whom he flirted at times in his rough way; and in truth the handsome sailor had crept farther into the maiden's heart than she at first imagined. In the wake of the lugger were several native canoes, skimming over the water under their dark brown sails hoisted on bamboo masts.

The trip was long but not tedious, for the sailors, ever jovial, struck up some wild but merry songs, which echoed strangely over the water, and the loud chorus from strong throats resounded over the broad stream, and died away towards the low banks. Then the natives in the canoes, fired with a like spirit, wafted their cheering harmonies on the evening air, and in this manner was the time beguiled. The night had deepened; the river was widening, and by the heaving of the boat, with the occasional dashing of spray on board, they knew they were entering on more open water. Very slowly the seamen spied a light ahead, which soon became more distinct, and steering directly for it, the dim figure of the brigantine soon loomed in the dark. The lugger's sails were taken in, and she glided alongside the *Saucy Jane*. Lights were now dancing along her deck, and rough faces peering over the bulwarks. The smart mate soon lowered a chair in which Domea and Loo were in turns hoisted on board, and the others clambered over the vessel's side.

The brigantine was in trim again for sea. All hands had been hard at work, and clean as a pink she now lay calmly at anchor under the lee and

bend of the shore, where the river poured into the channel leading to the bay.

Before the sun rose on the following day Kala and his followers had left, and the *Saucy Jane*, under weigh, was creeping along the shore in a north-westerly direction, whilst Aungua and Domea, with good old Momien at their side, gazed over the bulwarks at the romantic coast gliding past them. In two hours from this time the *Saucy Jane* was again brought to anchor off Aungua's well-remembered beacon-hill, and about a quarter of a mile from the shore. The sails were clewed up, but not furled; the guns protruding from the portholes, and the Long Tom uncovered, gave her a warlike appearance. Riding astern was the swiftest sailing quarter-boat, with mast stepped; the red flag blew gaily from the peak, and high up, seated cross-legged on the fore-royal yard, a keen-eyed tar kept a sharp look-out landward, and often scanned the broad sea horizon.

Noon passed, and about the middle of the first dog-watch, at three bells, the look-out hailed the deck, and reported the approach of some party on land, whom he recognised to be the captain and his band. Immediately the boat was manned and run

ashore. Those on board saw the captain and men embark, leaving some natives on the beach, and the boat returned. Grasper mounted the side of his loved craft, and hastily returning the mate's salute, shouted—

“Let fall the topsail! Man the windlass, lads!” A bustle on deck followed these commands, and calling to the mate, “Get her under weigh smartly, Davies; heave the boat up, and have the guns manned, for there's hot work for us yet,” Grasper turned, and warmly greeted his friends, who were right glad to see him again. Aungua noticed Grasper's left arm in a sling.

“Ah, Aungua,” said the captain, “I've got a little scratch there, but it's nothing much, only made me feel rather queer. But get the lassie below, for we shall have smart work before long.”

Domea went into the cabin, and on Aungua's return the windlass was clanking merrily, and the men singing as they hove the heavy anchor to the bows. Stepping to the captain on the poop, he asked what the danger was, and had in reply—

“Do you see yonder island, Aungua? Well, lad, under the lee of that there's a strong muster of war canoes, waiting for night, I guess; but now they see

a stir they'll be out, and that precious sun will hide them from us."

The two now remained conversing, and Grasper rapidly detailed the affair of the pass.

The anchor was up, sails set, the brigantine gathering way through the water, with the crew at their stations, when they discovered the tall dark sails of the watching canoes coming over the bay. The course of the *Saucy Jane*, now right before the wind, lay between two large islands ahead, but with a broad channel of nearly three miles between. From behind the island, on the starboard bow, the war-boats were gliding to intercept the brigantine. Without wavering, she continued her course straight for the channel, and in full view now came the canoes. They were of the largest size, swift-sailing boats, carrying large sails, crowded with armed natives, and about eleven in number. The brigantine stood on, and now the boats, amid loud shouts from their crews, divided into two parties, one on each bow, right on her course. Not a sound was heard on board the *Saucy Jane*. The men were at their posts, and the matches blazing in the gunners' hands. It was evidently the intention of the canoes to run alongside and board; and as they neared their

prey, dashing boldly on, the captain's voice, like a trumpet, roared out—

“Starboard and port bow guns!—fire!”

The reports rang over the sea, and the smoke curled away before the breeze; but the shots were aimed too high, and the natives, with a yell of delight, bent to their oars, and, still under sail, came with great speed. But the bow guns were again loaded.

Again the captain shouted, “Bow guns, fire!” And better aimed, the shots crashed into the midst of the canoes, scattering death around. Undaunted, on they came; Grasper saw it must be a running fight, and cried, “Both broadsides ready!”

“Ay, ay, sir!” shouted the gunners, in a breath.

“Then fire!” roared the captain, and the instantaneous reports of the ten guns shook the *Saucy Jane* from stem to stern. The smoke prevented the crew from seeing the effects of the broadsides, which the yells of agony and splashing of water told them must be great; but before it cleared, “Repel boarders!” came like a voice of thunder.

The canoes which had escaped the shots, unable to check their speed, dashed alongside, and the natives, who clambered up the channels, were met by the

smugglers; not one reached the deck. Like bees they clustered around the brigantine, but the keen cutlasses and pikes, and the smart volleys from the tars' muskets, defied all attempts to board. Still they persevered, but Grasper passed a word along; the guns on both sides were heavily shotted, and pointed down upon the canoes. High over the din of the conflict roared the command; the bright flames and the death-telling shots were belched forth with a terrific sound. The sea was strewn with splinters and dyed with blood as the *Saucy Jane* shot ahead. Still some of the canoes were unhurt, and leaving their comrades to struggle in the waves and cling to the shattered boats, they crowded all sail, and plied their oars in pursuit.

The light canoes, skimming like sea-birds over the water, were close in the brigantine's wake, and kept up a rapid fire from their bow-guns, and darkened the air with their clouds of arrows. To rid him of these troublesome chasers, Grasper brought the great gun to bear, and the flash of flame and loud report heralded the heavy shot which struck the foremost canoe, to their great dismay. Again the gun boomed, and the second shot, carrying away masts and sails, laid many dead. Terrified at this havoc, the canoes




dropped off and turned to fly, but continually from the stern of the fast receding ship, they saw with horror the bright flame and the curling smoke, whilst the iron messenger crushed into the midst of them. Soon the firing ceased. Evening was settling over the water; already the horizon and distant land were lost in mist, and as the crippled war-boats slowly made their way over the tossing waves, the brigantine could no longer be distinguished, but the lights in her stern windows, rapidly sinking in the distance, kept them in continual dread until they too disappeared.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE WOUNDED SMUGGLER.

No land in sight. All around, the wide blue sea was heaving. The meridian sun poured down in all its blazing glory as the *Saucy Jane* bounded gaily on her course on the day following her running fight in the bay. It was a noble picture to see the taut vessel bounding over the blue sea, with a strong wind abaft her beam, her port stunsails set, and the sunlight glaring on her white canvas. A large awning was spread over the quarter-deck, and a smaller one shading the helmsman, neatly dressed in white trousers and jumper, with a broad, blue collar. Some of the crew, on deck and aloft, were busy about work, and others, out on the flying jib-boom with long lines, were trying to catch the active bonita swimming in shoals around the bows. Oftentimes would a more fortunate fish, when half way out of the water, slip from the hook, and fall with a splash into the sea again, followed by the laughs of the onlookers at the fisherman's misfortune.



The flying fish, too, caused great sport ; although seen hundreds of times before, still the tars watched with amusement the shoals of silver glittering fish-birds rising from the water as they fled before some bonita foe.

Presently the bell aft sounded eight, and a loud call from the boatswain's pipe drew all attention. Then came the welcome sound of "dinner" in a loud, manly voice. The lines were at once hauled in, the fish gathered in, and the galley besieged.

"Now then, Gupta, look alive, old chum !" cried one, peeping in at one side of the cook's domain. "Heave ahead, old doctor !" cried another at the other door ; and Gupta, over head and ears in business, assisted by his mates, handed out the various kids full of smoking meat, at the same time exclaiming with a grin, "Here, you——; now, go ! go in, quick ! I plenty busy !" In a few moments the decks were clear, and the men below at their meal.

Leaving them so engaged, let us look after our friends. They are all on deck. Under the awning, enjoying the cool breeze, Domea is seated before the cabin windows on a cane chair, with her maid at her feet ; whilst Aungua, with turban off, leans against the capstan. Both the females begin to feel the

motion of the ship, but the strangeness of the scene, and the excitement of the past night, had prevented them from feeling the effects of sea-air before. Never before had Domea been so far out on the broad sea. With an almost childlike curiosity she watched everything on board ; looked with wonder at the rigging and crew of the brigantine, and trembled as she saw the men climbing about aloft. Then would she look out on the wide sea, sparkling in the sun, and watch the tossing waves ; but when she gazed over the bulwarks at the seething waters rushing by, she had to cling tight to Aungua, it made her so giddy. Poor Loo was even worse, but they have ventured on deck at Grasper's suggestion, and in the breeze feel refreshed, but every roll of the brigantine, as she dashes before the wind, keeps them in terror. Aungua has fared better ; he is used to long expeditions, but ship life on board the *Saucy Jane* is alike new and interesting to him, and he has for the first time passed a night on the ocean, slept at the lullaby of the wind, and been rocked by the motion of the vessel.

They are talking now together ; pouring out the thoughts which such a grand scene must produce, and speaking of that Great God who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand. Every thought of fear or

pursuit has fled from Domea's mind, and hopes for the future, for a happy home in a distant land, afford them abundant topics. On the raised house and abaft the awning, which extends only to the mainmast, Captain Grasper and Momien, with the doctor, are leaning against the swivel gun, now carefully covered up. The mate is below fast asleep, and Harding on the weather side of the platform, at a respectful distance from the talkers. A noise of hammering and sound of voices are heard over the vessel's stern. The captain looked pale, and with his left arm still in a sling, turned to the seaman, now acting as boatswain and officer of the watch—

“Harding, lad, tell the carpenter to come up and get his dinner, and get you for'ard too; I'll look after the craft.”

Harding responded, and springing on the deck looked over the stern. In a few minutes the carpenter and his mate clambered on board.

“Is there much damage, carpenter?” asked the captain, stepping to the edge of the platform.

“Pretty good bit knocked about in parts, sir, and the glass stove in, but nothing of consequence.”

“That's a comfort,” said Grasper, as he returned to Momien and the doctor; “they only knocked a

few splinters about, and cut up the rigging here and there. We got off cheap in my opinion, eh, doctor ?”

“Not so cheap, Captain Harry,” replied he, in his quick manner—“not so cheap as I could wish,” pointing to Grasper’s arm.

“True, doctor, true,” Grasper answered ; “I’ve had a dose, but then that was in the squabble in the pass. It makes me a little shaky, but I’ll soon pick up.”

The doctor shook his head gravely, but said nothing, as the captain continued—

“I guess our good friend Momien has come off worse than I have. This little trip and your skill, doctor, will set him square, though.”

“With the blessing of God, good captain,” said Momien, with a good-natured smile.

“Oh yes, of course ! of course !” said Grasper confusedly, and Momien seeing this, remarked—

“I have sometimes thought, captain, the arrow which struck me was poisoned, and that makes my recovery so tardy.”

“Not so ! not so !” exclaimed the doctor ; “there is no poison there, I can assure you ! Time and great care, and all will go well.”

Momien answered slowly and in his usual sweet

manner, "I know the arrow was not poisoned, as the mountaineers assured me of that ; but, indeed, I feel stronger now. This beautiful breeze puts fresh life into me."

As he spoke, Momien glanced around at the mighty ocean, and at the frothy waters in the long wake of the vessel. Overhead the sky was cloudless, but nearer the horizon, a belt of light clouds engirdled the sea. Momien had fallen off during the excitement of the past few days ; his wound, which was at first healing rapidly, now pained him much, and the good old pilgrim was weak ; but to-day the keen air and beautiful day enticed him out, and he felt refreshed. Grasper was not looking so hardy and hale as heretofore, but still persisted in knocking about, declaiming he was better, in spite of the doctor's ominous shake of the head. The doctor soon went below for some purpose, and Momien remained conversing with the captain. From him, Grasper learnt the whole history of Aungua and Domea, and when the relation came to the parts about the old merchant's unkindness and Munris's attempts, the captain's warm heart vented itself in many exclamations of wrath, and delight that he had so well repaid the Maywoon.

Next, nothing would satisfy him but Momien's history of himself, and, well pleased with his listener, the old pilgrim gratified him. From his earliest remembrance he traced his career whilst in the priesthood of Shoodagon, and then in his strange seekings after the truth. Grasper listened with great attention, and all this was strangely new to him ; but Momien purposely passed on rapidly, and speaking of his meeting with the missionaries, and his travels until his return to Rangoon, he ended with saying, " Ah, good captain, did you never think that every man in life is seeking after a something higher than this poor earth can afford ? We know it not, perhaps, and our yearnings lead us, as mine did, to seek rest in unworthy objects ; to chase phantoms, and grasp at bubbles. Oh ! captain," and the old man's eyes gleamed with a holy fire as he continued, " look around at this mighty ocean, a wide, watery waste for miles. Could your ship reach its port without a compass ? Ah, no ; then to seek a better port for our souls we need a guide, ay, and a pilot too. Did you never read, captain, in that blessed book—the guide you and I want—that those who go down to the sea in ships, and do business upon the great waters, behold



the wondrous working of the Lord. Did you never read this, captain?"

"I can't say I did fall across [that piece," replied Grasper, rather uncomfortable; but still liking the old man's winning way.

Momien was about to reply when the steward's head peered above the poop ladder, as he said, "Dinner ready, sir."

"Very good, steward," replied the captain. "Come, Momien," he continued, "let us below, and prop up the inner man a little."

Below they went, and by this time the mate was out to join them, and the men again on deck and at work, some mending the rigging, cut about in the fight, and others at various employments. When dinner in the cabin was over, Domea, feeling more accustomed to the motion, expressed her desire to see through the vessel.

"And so the lassie shall," exclaimed Grasper, in his rough kindly way, and at once started up for the purpose; but he found himself considerably more weak than when he came below, which the doctor observing, said—

"Captain Harry, I must positively insist on you

going into your cabin and resting yourself. Now, now you must, and no noise about it ; for in truth you will have to be carried there unless you rest now."

" Well, doctor, if 'tis so, then I must give under, I suppose ; but, strand me ! if I like laying up ; but upon my life, I'm like a rat ; no strength in me. Davies, you show my friends over the old craft, and I know Aungua is anxious to see how his nag fares. Don't stop the lads from their fun to-night, as I'll be out after a little lie down."

The captain now retired to his cabin ; but not without help from the doctor and Aungua, who would not for some minutes leave him, and the others expressed great anxiety, but Grasper persisted, and at length, under the tall mate's guidance, they started. Passing through the panel-door in the cabin bulk-head, they entered the well-stocked storeroom, and through another sliding door they found themselves in the neat little stall fitted up for Aungua's horse. Aungua approached and patted the fine creature ; but Domea would not venture, neither would Momien, the vessel occasionally lurching heavily. Beyond this temporary stable, they entered upon the crew's quarters. The portholes open and hatches off, sent

a fresh current of air through the place. The chests, ranged along the side tiers of bunks, were firmly lashed. Most of the hammocks were triced up; but in some sailors were sleeping, others sitting on their chests, busy mending clothes, and some amusing themselves with sundry models they were carving, and all with pipes or quids in their mouths. Domea must see all, and therefore the mate went still further forward, explaining the uses of things as much as he could, in his imperfect Burmese, whilst Momien kindly helped him in very good English. The boatswain's and carpenter's berth was examined. As they stepped within the narrow doorway, seated on a chest in a corner, they beheld a dark figure, who, hearing their entrance, took his hand away from his face, down which great tears were trickling fast: at which the mate cried—

“Eh, Gupta, what's thee piping about? thinking of your sweetheart?”

“No, no, Massa Davies! Gupta no fun now! Him lose chum. Old Bill gone, and Gupta bery sad.”

“Poor fellow!” said the mate, kindly, as he closed the berth-door and said to Momien, “The kind old fellow loved our old boatswain like a brother. They were knocking about together for years, but the old

man died, and Gupta grieves after him ; and it's seldom the lads can get a smile from him now."

Nothing more than the large casks containing the men's allowance of water carefully stored up could now be seen, so the party retraced their steps, Davies pausing at the lower-deck hatches to say the hold was beneath, stored with various things, such as water, provisions, ammunition, and cargo. How little did Domea then think that cargo contained, with others, her father's treasure chests and the rich prizes from the Pagoda of Shoodagon.

The day wore on, and the sun went down, quenching its blaze, as it were, in the great deep. On the poop the three Christians stood long, gazing wonderingly and admiringly at the gorgeous clouds. They had seen such before, but never beheld the sea reflecting such bright tints, nor seen the sails of the vessel so dyed with fast changing colours. It was a grand spectacle ; but soon the blue, cheerless look to the east came stealing over all, and as the colours fled and night gathered over the deep, the bright evening star peered forth and shot down its faint silvery radiance over the sea, until it seemed to reach the very sides of the vessel as she clove swiftly over the waves. Solemn thoughts occupied the minds of the three watchers as they leant

against the long gun for support, Domea clinging to her young husband. As the stars came out still more brightly, and the glittering constellations began to gem the sky, Momien said : "Ah, my dear children, what solemn and what happy thoughts should this scene impart to us. Like that departed orb, so we, after our task is done, must sink below life's horizon. Others dear to us have gone down to rest ; but how cheeringly that bright star tells us, that across the great sea of death there is a path of light leading to mansions of eternal joy."

"Such were my thoughts, good father," replied Aungua ; "and how our hearts should be raised, and our souls drawn out in gratitude to our blessed Saviour, that we tread that path."

"True, my son," said Momien ; "and let us not forget our path is of His choosing. Can we not now look back on the way in which the Lord hath led us, and see how every cloud brought its blessing."

"We can, indeed, father," Domea exclaimed.

The sky was now sparkling with bright orbs, and the night tempting ; but the three went below, whilst the good ship bounded on with untiring speed, and over head the constellations swept on in their grand march,

looking down so sweetly upon the earth, their rays falling like tears ; tears drawn by sadness, that their sister world, once so fair and so beautiful, now groaned and travailed in the bonds of sin. The bright stars seemed conscious that one of their sweet host had fallen from the ranks of heavenly bliss ; but with their tear came down soft soothing voices, could we but hear them ; voices telling of brighter days when the earth, redeemed by Him who made it, shall roll brighter, better, purer in the hosts of heaven for ever and ever.

The sailors had by this time gathered in jovial groups below. They had just ended their supper, and in clusters here and there beguiled the time with stirring yarns. Many of them had seen and done strange things ; but all missed the old boatswain, for none had such a stock of yarns as he had. One after another ceased their tales, and were collecting around the well-known seat where the old man had sat in life, on the chest before the foremast, now occupied by Harding and the carpenter. Sitting on the deck, and leaning against the chest, was Gupta, smoking his pipe, and apparently absorbed in thought, heedless of what was passing around. The men, rough

in manners, still respected the honest grief of the poor black.

"Come, boys, what say to a shanty?" cried one of the seamen, and many voices agreed.

"Harding, pitch us a stave or two."

"No, lads," replied the boatswain; "fix on another, for I'm dull to-night, and I shall give you something dry."

"Never mind, Jack," answered the carpenter; "give us something afore I turn in, which won't be long."

"Well, then, lads, if it must be, I tell you afore-hand, it's what perhaps you won't care about; but I've been thinking of the lads we've lost out of our mess lately, and you know I'm no coward; but my father went down years ago, and a brother of mine went upon the rocks, when all hands perished, and this makes me soberlike. Well, boys, here goes; and look out some of you to chime in." Clearing his throat, the handsome Englishman, in a bold, manly voice commenced what he called "The Ocean Grave."

Roll on, ye waves! tho' lashed in foam,  
And storms thy proud crest riding;  
Thy rage can ne'er shake that deep home  
Where now in death abiding,

In peace a noble heart doth rest,  
A peace thy wave ne'er shaketh.  
Down fathoms deep beneath thy crest,  
In calm no storm e'er breaketh,  
The youthful tar his death-watch keeps,  
In that deep grave, unknown, he sleeps,  
Which distant friends know not.

The bark had rocked on sleeping seas,  
When winds were scarcely breathing ;  
And then before the rushing breeze  
She rode, the waters seething.  
Thousands of miles away from home,  
The land in sight was looming ;  
The sky grew black, the waves in foam,  
While thunder-claps were booming.  
Towards the rocks, unseen in gloom,  
The struggling ship was hurled to doom—  
No human help was near.

The youthful tar on look-out spied  
The rocks, and heard the roaring  
Of breakers near ! and either side  
The fatal cliffs were tow'ring.  
She struck ! and in the yawning waves  
The sailors vain were battling.  
They sunk ! while o'er their ocean graves  
The thunder wild was rattling,  
And lightning gleams lit up the coast ;  
The noble craft in fragments tossed,  
Upon the raging deep.

No mother's love was there to cheer  
Her boy with fond caressing ;  
No father's voice 'mid starting tear,  
To give his soul a blessing ;  
Unknown to them, his grave he found  
Beneath the mighty billow ;  
And wild winds sung his dirge around  
His lonely ocean pillow.



He rests in death! he sleeps profound,  
Until at Heaven's trumpet sound,  
The sea gives up its dead!

As Harding ended each verse, the best singers among the men caught up the last three lines in chorus, and nobly did it sound. As the chorus of the last verse ceased, and the tars loudly applauded, Harding said: "There, lads, it's rather dull, but puts me in mind of my young brother; and I suppose many a one of us will feed the sharks some day. Now, who's the next?"

After some more songs, of a livelier and more buccaneering style, the men broke up and turned in, except those whose watch it was. Rocked in that creaking cradle on the deep, and lulled by the moaning wind, now too strong for stunsails, the rough tars fell asleep, and over their heads on the deck paced the watch, whilst the brigantine, plunging more deeply her bows into the briny waves, sped on her lonely course.

Before the windlass stands a small capstan, and seated thereon is the look-out, well wrapped up, and as he swings his legs to and fro he hums a little ditty to himself. Further aft, and under the lee of the lugger, lashed amidships right abaft the galley, others of the watch while away the time with low-voiced

yarns ; and standing on the weather side, close to the helmsman, is the tall mate. On the poop, leaning against the long gun, with the huge sail bellying out behind him, is a figure in a thick monkey-jacket, with the collar turned up, and with one hand thrust in the pocket, whilst the other is hid by the jacket itself, the armless sleeve blowing in the wind. It is Captain Harry Grasper. The flash of weakness had in some degree passed off, and, in spite of doctor's wishes, he has ventured on deck. His is not the spirit to brook confinement, unless there be real necessity ; and the wayward rover, with a heart full of new and strange emotions, has come up on to the deck of his loved craft. When all is hushed, save the murmuring of the mighty deep, he loves to walk the deck in a strange dreamy state, when thoughts, like phantoms in the night on swift steeds, go rushing by one after another, and when gone are forgotten. At such times his mind wanders in cloud-land, thinking of nothing definite, but listening to the gurgling waves and the whistling wind, and the creaking masts as they bend before the breeze, straining the cordage.

Grasper loved these wild, dark moments too well to remain below, but felt himself weak in body, and his thoughts lingering on subjects before un-

known, or if known uncared for. A dart has been shot into his heart keener than the arrow which pierced his arm. Momien's words, few but pointed, but more especially his narrative, had stirred up in Grasper something which had long slumbered undisturbed. He was not one of those who, in the folly of their hearts, say there is no God. Far from that ; Harry Grasper knew this, and sometimes had he viewed with a feeling of awe the midnight sky with its teeming worlds, or watched the boiling waves of the deep lashed by the hurricane ; but beyond the existence of a Mighty God, the Maker of all things, Grasper had penetrated but little. From his earliest days, brought up to a smuggler's life, he had believed it right, and now the belief of the honesty of his course was enwoven with his whole being.

To him there was no dishonesty, though others thought so, in carrying goods from one land to another free of duty. What right had others to molest him ? and if they did, he only stood on self-defence. This was the logic he had been accustomed to ; and the many, many lives which had been sacrificed throughout his career were all in defence of himself and his rights. Thus step by step he had gone on, and if a faint voice within ever doubted the honesty or

righteousness of his acts, it was soon smothered, and, growing fainter and fainter, had ceased to be heard at all, until to-day, when it seemed to revive.

There was a struggle in the wounded smuggler's heart. The ocean was raging, but as yet the voice had not come to bid it "be still." He now strove to calm his conscience in his usual way—"More roads than one to a town," thought he. "If a man acts as a man, and steers as close to the wind as times allow; does a good turn to a friend when wanted; what more can he do?" With all these soothing thoughts, he felt his friends below, in whom he was so interested, were treading a better road. Again the deceiver whispered, "What's the odds, longer or shorter, smooth or stormy, if you reach the same port?" And Grasper, with a load off his heart, took a turn or two up and down the poop; but he felt how much of his giant strength had left him, and he returned to his old post, when a new subject rose in his mind. Whilst his friends were deep in slumber below, the captain was resolving on doing an act of justice. He reviewed the past; thought of the store of wealth in his vessel's hold; and then muttered, "Yes, let's have fair play; there's enough and to

spare below, without that. The lassie ought to have the old fellow's cash ; and she shall, too, but without knowing whose it is. Yes, fair play. I may be laid on my beamends, and never give them a hail again, and that'll be one good chalk to my account."

How strangely things work ! Unswayed by the evil counsels of the old boatswain, whom he often missed, Captain Grasper went below to his cabin, firmly resolved on carrying out his intention, but almost tottering from weakness as he reached his cabin door. Had he been in full strength, perchance such thoughts he would have laughed at and turned them hastily aside ; but the strong man is brought down by a stronger hand, and laid low by sickness ; feelings and thoughts flood into his heart, which at other times would have been flung back like the wild waves hurled in foam from the sharp bows of the swift-speeding brigantine.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE WAVERING HEART.

AND thus passed the day and the night out on the heaving sea. Within four days of rapid sailing, the *Saucy Jane* entered the Malacca Straits; but a change had fallen over the crew. Smartly did they fly to their posts at the call of duty; but not a song was heard and not a laugh throughout the vessel. In silence, or with suppressed voices, they went about their work, and often was the cuddy-door besieged, and every time the steward appeared on deck, he was surrounded; and the doctor when he went to attend to any who were needing help, was pestered with questions on all sides. Captain Grasper had rapidly declined, and was now confined to his cabin. The wound in his arm puzzled the skilful doctor, and the rapidity with which the giant man had been levelled surprised all.

In dangerous waters, but where they had been before in their rich cruises, the smugglers were on the

alert ; the watches strengthened and armed, whilst the guns were shotted ready for service ; but the crew looked in vain to see their captain on deck. True, the mate was there, and they could trust him ; but none like the captain. The same sad feeling filled the hearts of old Momien, Aungua, Domea, and all aft. Untiring were they in their attentions ; Domea, assisted by Loo with gentle hands attended to the invalid. And Aungua, with his strong young arms, was there to help ; and Momien, who, whilst Grasper waned, was rapidly waxing stronger, scarcely left the cabin, but cheered by his kind manner and voice the wounded man.

Sometimes they were left alone, and then there would be earnest conversations, and Grasper seemed to invite them. Apparently no longer averse, he listened to the old Christian, who would talk of other lands and strange scenes, but always leave some seed of truth in his hearer. It was as if he knew that his days were fast closing, and he longed to labour for the Lord whilst strength and opportunity remained ; but at the end of every conversation, a strange smile of doubt flitted over Grasper's face ; yet still he listened, although Momien could never draw out his thoughts.

At the close of the fourth day at sea, the captain

rallied considerably, and was sitting in an arm-chair in his cabin, the stern ports being open, and a current of fresh air filling the place. As usual, Momien was there, well pleased that Grasper was so much better ; but well knowing the strange fickleness of human nature, that returning health too often removes any serious impression received during illness, he was the more earnest in his conversation. Grasper's reserve, however, in opening his thoughts proved a great barrier. Every plan he could devise, Momien tried. The captain would listen and ask questions, but beyond that, nothing could he draw out, and his honest heart felt saddened as he saw the smile of doubt so often crossing Grasper's face. Could he but find out what he believed in, or what he did not, he could then proceed more certainly ; but now his only efforts were kindly and in the way of pleasant converse to speak of that better country wherein nothing that defileth can ever enter, but only those whose sins are purged away in the blood of God's dear Son ; and also of the necessity of being a sincere follower of Jesus in life, sweeping aside every weight which may hinder our free running in the Christian racecourse. Very earnestly did he show the utter impossibility of a man winning himself an entrance into life eternal, but that



Jesus must be the sinner's all in all—his righteousness and redemption. This conversation had dropped, for Momien was too wise to be continually harping on the same string, and looking deep into Captain Grasper's heart, we find him well pleased that it is so. Seemingly inviting these conversations, he really did so only to please the old Christian, for whom he felt great respect. Like most men, he agreed in the truth of Momien's remarks, and clearly saw their application to others ; but not once did they run foul of himself. Rising slowly from his chair, he glanced through the large stern ports, at the same time remarking : " This breeze is falling off, Momien. We shall be like a log in the water in a few hours, I guess, and rather a queer place this, too, to be becalmed in. There are too many of those Malay prows knocking about here ; not very pleasant customers for a quiet tea-party ; but they know the *Saucy Jane* by this time too well to come afoul of her."

The captain was right, and as Momien stood by his side, looking through the port out upon the water, he saw the waves had fallen, the wind having rapidly lessened in force, and now coming over the sea in faint ripples. The brigantine had every sail set : stunsails,

and gaff-topsail, a flying jib-topsail, and even a ring-tail rigged outside the huge mainsail ; but she made slow progress through the water.

Grasper turned from this view of the quiet water, and returning to his chair, said : " Can you tell me, Momien, what makes your Burmese countrymen so delighted at an accident ? Strand me ! if I've not seen some of them floundering in the river and likely to be drowned, while all standing by were grinning at the joke, I suppose they called it ; and yet they have good hearts in them, and are plucky fellows, too."

" I have no doubt, captain, but it has much puzzled you," replied Momien, seating himself on the cabin locker. " It used to surprise me also some years ago ; but since then I have seen many causes for their strange merriment at such scenes."

" You're right ; it is strange, and no mistake," said Grasper. " Why, they never strike up a tune until somebody slips his cable. I've often thought of this, but in all my stock of knowledge about Nature's queer ways, I can't find any clue to it."

" I will tell you, captain, what I think the cause. One thing we must consider, the tyranny of the Boa. I have seen many nations, and can compare one

government with another ; but our Boa is the worst of tyrants. Wealthy himself, whatever he needs he extorts from his subjects. Their persons and their property are all under the cruel power of the feudal lords and the Boa, hence they are careless generally and are merry whilst they can be ; but their religion is the greatest cause of their being so hard-hearted at misfortunes."

"And how does that happen?" said Grasper. "Let's hear a little about it. The Seredan I knew, but he was very strict about his fine temples and such like."

"Well, captain, their religion teaches them that after death the soul, if good in life, will become some good man again on earth—a priest or a prince—and so continually, the better they live, the better will be their next state ; and if they are very good, then they have the highest happiness to them possible."

"And what is that?" asked Grasper.

"To become nothing!" said Momien.

"My conscience ! but that's a queer happiness And how about the bad ones?"

"Oh ! they go into the forms of bad men, and sometimes into animals and even vegetables ; but they believe every evil that befalls a man on earth,

every mishap and sickness, is a just punishment for evil deeds done in former lives, and hence they laugh at the misfortunes of others."

"Ah, that makes it clear, Momien. It's a case of sarve him right. But where did they get that religion from? for it's a downright pity such bold fellows should be stuffed up with such trash, although it is little I know of the matter."

"Where they got that religion from," answered Momien, "is very uncertain; but I am of opinion it came across the bay. Our traditions say from Ceylon; but in my many wanderings here and there, I have found in Hindostan a sect of people much like the followers of Buddha, and there are several monuments, old sculptured caves and rocks, of very ancient date, bearing Buddhist commands and principles. These with other things seem to infer that the religion was once widely spread over India, but persecuted by the incoming Brahmins or Hindoos, the people fled to Ceylon, and thence to Burmah. Wherever it came from, it is indeed a sad thing that so many thousands—ay, millions—of precious soul are so deluded. Their hearts are instilled with every possible sin; their minds are fed on lies of the greatest enormity; and their precious souls are tossed

about like the troubled waves of this mighty ocean, without a rest or a home, through a long, dark, uncertain eternity !”

“ You’re right, Momien,” replied Grasper, as the old Christian ceased ; “ you’re right. For it is a pity, strand me if ! it’s not, to see such lusty fellows worshipping an old lump of gilded wood. “ It’s strange; and yet once on a time the people in my own land, they say, did the same. What’s to be said for it ?”

Apparently not hearing this question, Momien answered, “ I have never travelled so far as your native land, good captain, but have been among people like them in a certain degree—with the same religion, I mean—but I have seen them bowing to idols.”

“ Oh, I see who you mean,” replied Grasper, getting interested in the subject. “ Yes, there are Roman Catholics. They worship images, so I’ve heard, and sometimes the old bones of those who slipped their cables ; and I don’t know but what they do a bit of the sort before the Pope, too.”

“ I have heard of them, captain ; and although I think even there may be some true hearts, yet it is to me one of Satan’s masterpieces of gilded traps for

souls. But what makes you think they adore the Pope?"

"Well, I don't know, Momien, unless it is because they pay him more respect somehow than—than—somebody higher."

"What is it you call idolatry, good captain?" now asked Momien.

"What do I call idolatry, Momien?"

"It is when a man bows down and prays to blocks of wood or stone, and sometimes when they worship men no better than themselves, and in some parts, too, to animals. Now, I call that idolatry."

"Well, captain, you are right to a certain extent," replied Momien; "but I have read of a high lord, a Syrian chieftain, on whose hand the king used to lean when he went into the temple of his idol to worship. Now this chief became a Christian. Now, captain, he bowed himself before the idol, but in his heart worshipped them not. What can you say to this?"

"Well, that slues me; strand me!" said Grasper, "but that's beyond my depth. If bowing before an idol isn't idolatry, what is?"

"Ah, captain, there is such a thing as bowing the heart, you know, as well as bending the knee. It all

has to do with the heart. The heart must be set on no other object but on God."

Grasper had all a sailor's love for argument, but as Momien was about to reply, a knock at the cabin-door interrupted them.

"Come in," from the captain, was followed by the door opening, and the tall mate stepping within, making a respectful salute.

"Some of those proas knocking about, captain," said he; "the wind has almost gone asleep, and the rogues seem mustering."

"Ah, they want the night, Davis, but we've got the moon for a blessing, and the long-raker will tickle them up a bit—but do the sails draw at all?"

"A little, sir, aloft, and the stun'sails now and then in puffs."

"Well, Davis, keep a smart look-out, and tell the lads I'll be on deck by daylight to-morrow, for I feel picking up at a spanking rate, and if those devils come any closer, send them a civil note from the raker to look out for squalls."

"Ay, ay, sir," and the mate left. Momien had now gone upon deck. Aungua and Domea also were both there, along with the doctor, all looking eagerly from the poop through a telescope at some objects seen

away on the starboard quarter. The land was in sight at no great distance, and between it and the brigantine were several long, sharp-bowed Malay proas, with their large lateen sails hoisted and long oars out, but they appeared gliding very slowly over the water. They had been seen and narrowly watched for some time by the smugglers, who were well prepared for any attack.

The proas hovered around for some considerable time, but did not venture nearer, or within range of the long swivel. Towards evening the wind again freshened, and the *Saucy Jane* sped rapidly through the narrow straits. Out of these waters the brigantine now entered the China sea, with a sharp wind to beat against. This was a task of many days; but like a sea-bird she ploughed her way, now on this tack, and then on the other. Captain Grasper was again on deck, and wonderfully improved in strength. His left arm, now freed from the sling, he could use once more, and the crew were merry as before. Momien, too, grew amazingly better, and all on board were in high spirits.

The *Saucy Jane* made long boards; but the run through these waters was not free of danger. For the sake of his friends, Grasper kept well off the land,



and clear of the crafts knocking about ; but when on the starboard tack and the land hove in sight, they attracted the attention of many junks and trading boats. Still the brigantine stood on ; but when well through the sea and with the starboard tack aboard, and the land looming up, a large war junk, carrying sixteen guns and well manned, hove in sight. She stood down for the brigantine, and the smugglers saw a smaller craft crowded with men coming up in her wake. The *Saucy Jane* held her course, and the war junk altering hers kept doggedly off her port quarter, whilst the smaller craft hauled ahead, and then with the wind right abeam, stood across the junk's fore-foot and ran close astern of the brigantine. This was apparently to observe her better. Grasper allowed her to pass unmolested, and she returned to the junk. It was exciting for all on board the *Saucy Jane*, for the two crafts were gradually nearing her. A shot from the long swivel, fired across their bows, made them haul to windward and go on the other tack ; but beyond keeping within sight for some hours they gave no more concern, and the brigantine kept on her course, making rapid stretches to windward.

Sixteen days from leaving the Malacca straits, with no adventure beyond such as now related, and the

brigantine was breasting the sea of Japan. Grasper was himself again, and by his kindness, boldness, and skill he became dearer to his friends. His management of the brigantine in a sweeping typhoon had caused Momien and Aungua to think even more highly of his powers, if possible, and as happy as the day was long so passed the time. But although Grasper knew the daily practice of Momien and the others of gathering in their cabin for prayer, he received every intimation of their wish that he would join them with coldness, and in truth every allusion to serious matters brought a shade over his face, as well as the smile of doubt. Momien saw this, and, deeply regretting it, talked more of other things than his heart desired.

Aungua and Domea seemed to have lost all care. Their hearts were happy, and bright hopes of the future cheered them. Not to be forgotten, the maid, Loo, was wellnigh as happy as her mistress, and the crew had often to smile at Harding's forgetfulness at times, and many a joke he received good-humouredly. Thus all went well, and the *Saucy Jane* was standing in for the land. As evening fell over the water, the high cliffs were seen to the west, but at a great distance. The brigantine stood boldly

in, and the night deepening brought out the bright moon, and the land could be distinctly seen rapidly rising from the ocean. Nearer and nearer they sailed. One by one the sails were taken in; soon the anchor dropped with a terrific sound, and the *Saucy Jane* was rocking silently on the water, almost abreast of a large river pouring into the sea, whilst the land on each side of its mouth stretched out into the distance, enclosing the smuggler craft in a snug and expansive bay.

The bustle of anchoring, stowing sails, and making all taut was soon over, and with the exception of the rushing water, the sighing wind, and tread of the watch, not a sound was heard.

Whilst all is thus quiet, and the scudding clouds coursing over the silvery moon, it may be well to say off what land that high, rugged, rocky coast is the barrier, and where that broad river led to. Where we to enter those lofty portals and follow the course of the river, cutting deep into the rocky coast, after a run of sixteen miles or thereabouts, we reach a town on the left bank. We are in the territory of Manchooria. Away to the east rolls the sea of Japan, and beyond that islands of the same name. To the south, Corea and China are the bounds. Mongolia to the west, and away in

the distant north are the dominions of Russia, with ice-bound Siberia to fill up the rear. Manchooria, under the rule of China, is very high in parts and mountainous. Deserts and vast elevated plains, swept by cold winds, characterize this land. Further inland are well-wooded plains, with noble rivers meandering through their rich groups, and the people chiefly nomade in habits; but here and there, where they are settled in towns and villages, they are kind and hospitable to strangers.

The river, at the mouth of which the *Saucy Jane* now rode at anchor, winds northerly through the land for many miles, and bending west is at last divided into three branches, one again extending to the north, and becoming smaller until lost in the mountains where it has its rise. Travelling across this mountain ridge for nearly forty miles, we should reach another town situate on the west bank of a large river. Passing upwards, in a very winding course, through alternate patches of desert and fertile land, the river pours into the noble Soongari, one hundred and forty miles from the last-mentioned town.

Leaving the Soongari to roll its red waters sluggishly down the northern slope of the land, we now return to the brigantine.

Morning soon dawned over the scene, and discovered the rocky cliffs and the river's mouth but a short distance from her. The crew were out like bees, both quarter boats lowered, and masts stepped with some hands getting them in order. The main hatch was off and a tackle being rigged. A similar commotion is in the cabin. Domea and Loo are busy in their berth, while Grasper, Aungua, and Momien are chatting earnestly at the table, on which a large chart is spread.

"Well, Aungua," remarked the captain, "I shall soon be dipping my ensign to you, and who knows but I may give you another hail some day."

"Ah, captain," said Aungua, "you must come back. When you have visited your native land come back again, and bring your aged mother, too. Our home shall be yours."

"Thanks, thanks, perhaps I may hunt you up; but now about landing. Do you know the land well, Momien?"

"I know the town further up this river," replied the aged Christian, "but little beyond that. The people are kind to strangers, and we can procure boats to travel further up the stream."

"And where do you say you'll drop anchor?" asked the captain.

Aungua answered, "That, captain, we cannot say. Somewhere on the Soongari, which good Momien is well acquainted with, and then I shall turn a hunter that we may live."

Grasper smiled, and then said, "No, no, Aungua ; you shall have a better billet than that, trust me. But come, we must be stirring. How are the lassies looking up?"

In a few moments more and they were all out on deck, and looking over at the boats alongside. In them were stowed many articles ; in one several small teakwood chests were seen, and in the other boat the thwarts were taken out ; straw laid down all in readiness for Aungua's horse, which now stood on the brigantine's deck, fully equipped with saddle, tiger's skin, and bridle. The animal had weathered the passage nobly. Domea was in a much warmer dress, as were the others. Her head was enveloped in her mantle, and all had their feet cased in warm leggings, with shoes, for the weather was cold and chilly to them.

All were gazing at the heavy loads in the boats, but to their inquiries they could only get a laugh from the captain, and a remark that he was the skipper, and they must obey orders.

"Aungua," said he, "better than all this going ashore, I will hoist the lugger over and take you, baggage and all, up the river as far as we can go. It will save a sea of trouble. What do you say to it?"

"Most willingly, captain, would we do so, but perhaps an armed boat would meet with opposition in passing the town," said Aungua.

"Pass in the night, lad," said Grasper.

"No, brave captain," said Momien, "we must relinquish that idea. We have many weary miles to travel, and it will be needful to sojourn at the town that we may procure a guide for the interior. You are indeed kind, good captain. You have acted as a brother to us, but I fear even we must part soon after landing, for if the natives see your vessel it may rouse their jealousy."

"No, no, Momien, I'll be stranded if I don't take you up to the town and see you comfortable there. Leave the traps all safe, and then you come back and see me off. We shall be back then before the Manchoos find the craft out. I know it might injure your credit with them if they saw her, and so I'll weigh the moment I return. But now, my good friends, let's all ashore. Davis, the ladies first; and when my boat is off, hoist over the nag in Harding's."

This was speedily accomplished, and taking leave of the mate and doctor, our friends were soon safely seated in one of the boats, manned by a crew of twelve armed men. Captain Grasper, the last to go over the side, brought down with him one of his own rifles, in a case, and a brace of his best pistols. These he intended as a parting gift to Aungua, and in the boat, besides the money for Domea in the teak chests, made on purpose by the carpenter, he had many useful things to give them.

With a parting word to Davis, the boat pushed off, and the twelve oars bent under the strong strokes of the men. After a short delay, the horse was safely got in the other boat, which followed in the captain's wake. Entering the river, both boats got under sail before a good wind. At parts they passed deep caves in the rocks, with shelving beaches, and rough natural paths winding up to the cliffs above. The river banks gradually lowered in height, with here and there small clumps of trees. After several miles the town broke full in view. Near the water the land was low, with many strange huts and houses thinly scattered along the shore; in their rear rose a high cliff sloping to the beach on one side. Up its sides and on the top clustered more dwellings, and over



all was reared a many-roofed pagoda of Chinese build. The river was dotted with many canoes and boats, towards which Grasper steered. Wisely laying aside, and putting out of view their weapons, the crew took in the sails, and the natives curiously watched the two boats shooting rapidly in, the long oars simultaneously rising and falling into the water.

The boats grounded, and Momien sprang on shore, followed by Aungua, the natives crowding around. A few words from Momien, and the crew were permitted to land, and lift the things ashore, and the horse was likewise got out.

In a few hours from this time, a small house had been procured, and the things placed therein. Overwhelmed with gratitude, neither Aungua nor Domea could sufficiently thank the captain, who laughingly checked their warm bursts of grateful expressions.

Soon after this the boats, unloaded, were again manned, with Aungua, Domea, and Momien once more on board, Loo being left in the town. Astern of the captain's boat a light canoe was towed, and the party lost sight of the town as they made their way towards the sea.

Later in the afternoon, a group of four were stand-

ing on the high cliffs overlooking the sea. At their feet a narrow gap, or cleft, led down from the steep rocks to the beach below. To their left the river poured into the bay, and in front the brigantine was getting under way. The men's voices and the clanking chain sounded clearly, and one by one they saw the white sails loosened.

Domea was leaning on Aungua's arm, and between them and Momien to their right stood Captain Grasper. He was smiling merrily, and chatting in a lively manner, but never before had he felt so sad at heart. His affections were strangely entwined around his brown-skinned friends. The others, too, were very heavy at heart; for in the captain they had found a noble and a faithful friend. Again and again, Aungua pressed him to come back, but Grasper would not promise.

"There goes the bunting," said he, as the brigantine's flag was run up to the peak. "I must aboard," he continued, gaily. "I'm sorry to go, Aungua, but it must be. Our lives are different, and to roam the sea is my lot. Good-bye, lassie; good-bye, Aungua; and good-bye, good Momien. I'll never forget the scenes we passed together; and mind you give a thought or two of 'the captain.'"

Warmly did the smuggler grasp their hands, and in return only Momien could speak.

"God speed you, captain," said he; "our best joy will be to see you come back to us. But remember the talks we have had, and do not forget, captain, that idolatry lurks in the heart; and in this world there are more Shoodagons than one. Once more good-bye, and God speed you!"

The captain hurried down the steep path, and without once looking back until his boat reached the *Saucy Jane*, he turned around and waved his cap.

As our three friends remained on the cliff, they saw the *Saucy Jane's* sails sheeted home, and she stood out from the bay. They could plainly see Grasper on the poop, and when at a greater distance, the five star-board guns rang out their loud report, and the white smoke curled away before the breeze. The red ensign was now dipped three times, to which they responded by waving their scarfs in the breeze. The brigantine rapidly left the bay, and saddened, but hopeful, the Christians still watched her receding in the distance.

In that lonely scene they lingered until the hull of the *Saucy Jane* disappeared, and then her sails one by one rapidly sank beneath the horizon, and they saw her no more.

## CHAPTER XII.

## BURMAH'S "BOA."

SPEEDING westward, and returning to the bay where the Burmese war boats were so signally repulsed by the brigantine, we must now see what became of the crestfallen warriors; and what of Behring, the bold Tiger of Yumadong.

When last we saw the war boats, they were hastening to the land. All were more or less battered from the smuggler's terrific fire, and four of the canoes had gone down. Curses of rage, mingled with the groans of wounded warriors, could be heard from every boat as they rowed shoreward. Some were leaky and required constant baling, and they were in continual dread lest they should see the flash of the brigantine's stern gun, and feel the heavy iron crashing into the midst of them.

The officers, more especially, were sullen and mortified. They knew the inevitable result when their failure reached the Boa's ears, which it must do

sooner or later, and with clouded brows they neared the shore, to join the party whom Behring had detained in the pass. These war canoes, be it remembered, had been assembled by the Burmese, who had reached Arracan without molestation from the mountaineers, and had been purposely sent on in advance to intercept the *Saucy Jane*. It will be seen from this that both parties of Burmese, that forming the garrison in Arracan, and that brought up by the Maywoon, were quite ignorant of the mishaps which had befallen each other.

By the time they were well into the shore, and endeavouring to pierce the gloom for any signs of the Maywoon's warriors, that identical band of braves in hot anger had passed the undefended barricade and made all speed down to the plain, leaving a small party behind to bring on the wounded and the dead, with the body of the Maywoon. Reaching the plain, the Burmese chiefs held a brief consultation, and then the party divided, one body riding in hot haste towards the seacoast, and the other, nearly four hundred strong, turned in the direction of Behring's village.

The mountain chief was there before them. He knew well the stir that must follow when the Bur-

mese came, because he had not obeyed the Maywoon's orders, which his returned party brought, and so intercepted the brigantine. Behring had weighed this matter over well in his mind, and knowing every mountain path, he had sped homeward. Some of his followers remained to track the Burmese, and watch their movements; others hurried away to the rocky nest, while some followed their chief to the village.

Arriving there, Behring found his orders had been carried out. Kala had given the village a peaceful aspect, and night now being well set in, the greater portion of the villagers had retired within their dwellings. Only a few men remained, the greater part being on the mountains in the rear, ready, at their chief's bugle-call, to swarm into the village. The cattle were safely penned or lying beneath the shady trees, and the dogs tied up. On the river's bank the canoes were moored, and to all appearance the village wore its wonted aspect of peace.

Entering Behring's house, in his usual apartment, we find him with his two head chiefs, Kala and Keintalee. The room, as before, contained the implements for hunting, but the chiefs had their weapons near at hand, although Behring's mask was

nowhere to be seen. An oil lamp was burning, and Behring paced the room whilst the others sat and smoked.

"Ah, Kala, your bold heart would have rejoiced to see how we kept those dogs at defiance in the pass," said Behring, with a gleam of delight in his eyes.

"True, indeed, my chief," said Kala, "and much more to have seen the brave stranger bringing the proud Maywoon to the dust."

Keintalee remarked, "I am burning to hear how fared the stranger in the bay."

"We shall soon know," replied Behring; "but we need not fear for him. Never saw I such a man or such followers as his. Undaunted by the hundreds of the enraged Burmese, the bold strangers broke through the barricade, and like demon giants to me, they mowed down the foe. I was wellnigh wounded, for I could not but gaze with wonder and admiration at their bravery, and their loud war shouts, too. Even in battle they must laugh."

"No, indeed," rejoined Kala, "we need not fear for them. See what a noble vessel the stranger has; what terrific cannon, and so many bold men, who fear nothing."

Behring laughed heartily as some thought crossed

him, and then remarked, "We will make the Burmese on their return tell us fully of the affair, and then we shall know what they think of the stranger, and how they liked the 'Tiger of Yumadong.'"

"We shall be ordered to hunt him from the mountains, I expect," said Keintalee, with a smile; and the others laughed again at the idea.

"But, my chief," said Keintalee, after awhile, "what reply will you give them about our not capturing the strangers?"

Behring thought soberly a few seconds, and then replied, "I know not yet. One thing, I must first see if they know that the Maywoon had the bird caged here. I think not, and he is dead; but if they do know, then I fear we must have a struggle. I want this not yet; but if they know nothing of Aungua's bride, then few words will prevent the storm."

"Surely they are coming," said Kala, springing to his feet and advancing to a window, which he threw open. A confusion of voices at once fell on their ears, and at the same moment a man entered to inform them that the Burmese were crossing the ford.

Each now lighting a torch, the chiefs hurried out with only spears in hand, and others of the villagers, with torches and spears, also hastened to the stockade



postern. As Behring threw open the narrow gate he heard the horses splashing in the river and their trampings on the bank ; at the same time the glare of the torches revealed the Burmese, who were riding up the bank with the water dripping from riders and steeds.

The Burmese leader at once dismounted and greeted Behring, who scanned the numerous horsemen around him. The steeds were well tired and the warriors too.

"Dismount, dismount," said Behring ; "let the warriors dismount, chief. Truly your ride has been long and fast, and you shall have whatever my humble village can supply."

"I am thankful," replied the Burmese leader, "and your kindness we will accept. In truth, we had been here long before had we not met the lawless robber of these mountains, he who is styled the 'Tiger of Yumadong.'"

"You surprise me !" said Behring, with well-feigned astonishment : "he is daring, indeed, to molest the Boa's warriors ; but surely you conquered and seized the 'Tiger Mask ?'"

"Ay, we made the vile marauder retreat with great loss before us," replied the leader, with much

of the braggadocio in his manner ; " we made him flee, but had not time to pursue, or else he now would have been swinging in the forests yonder."

" Doubtless, chief, he would have been well punished then," said Behring. " The ' Tiger Mask ' seldom interferes with us, who are but humble fishers and hunters. But wilt thou not dismount your warriors, and then tell me, if I may know the reason of my village being thus honoured ?"

" Yes," replied the leader, " we will enter ; for I have much to tell and to ask, brave chief of Arracan."

There was something stern in his tone, which Behring observed, but appearing not to notice, he loudly told his men to hurry in and prepare to refresh the warriors, whilst they, at their leader's command, dismounted. The many horses were now picketed, and a strong guard left to protect them from wild beasts or robbers. The other Burmese, only too glad, entered the village, where their presence caused great excitement. All the villagers were venturing out, females and even children, with torches, throwing a strong light all around.

In a brief space the warriors, in groups here and there on the sward, were busy demolishing the viands supplied by their peaceable-looking hosts.

The Burmese leader was in Behring's dwelling. Kala and Keintalee were out in the village, apparently to direct the banquet, but really keeping a careful watch on the Burmese. Behring had soon devised a plan of action, and having the leader in his own apartment, with a plentiful meal ready, he addressed his guest with—

“Welcome, chief, to my humble cot, and whilst you eat, I will answer your question, and explain why I did not capture the stranger, as the Maywoon sent me commands to do.”

The leader replied, in a sneering tone, “Do so, chief of Afracan, for, by Buddha, I like not these appearances. The stranger was in league with the ‘Tiger Mask,’ for I saw him myself at his side. Clear this up, bold chief, and we are friends; if you cannot clear it, my warriors shall lay your village in ashes!”

These were high words, and he spoke as conquerors only would dare to speak; but he saw not the smile which flitted over Behring's face, neither did he notice the chief's fingers playing with his bugle, well hid beneath his garments, as he replied, with a subdued tone—“You judge

harshly, chief of Burmah; but eat of that humble fare, whilst I explain this matter. The chief accordingly set to at the viands, and Behring continued—"You must know, brave warrior, that of the hundreds of braves of Arracan who returned with the Maywoon's commands, a few only belonged to my village; the others went to their various homes; and of the fifty whom the great lord of Prome sent back with me, only a few were my retainers. Therefore, on hearing the Maywoon's commands to capture the stranger, whose vessel was then off the coast, I could not command more than—nay, not so many—as twoscore of men; women and children were numerous, but could I, chief, have captured the stranger with them? Moreover, the stranger chief of the sea came with many boats, filled with fierce armed men, by night, and suddenly attacked us. We resisted, but in vain; and had either to yield them provisions or be destroyed. This, chief, is why I could not do as the Maywoon commanded. Had we been so brave as the warriors of Burmah, we might have told a better tale; but Buddha has not blessed us so!"

"True, chief of Arracan," replied the Burman—

"true; the Burmans only can sweep their enemies from the land. But why did you not call our warriors in Arracan to seize the stranger?" The leader paused, and looked up as he asked this.

"Because," replied Behring, "they kept strict guard over our village, and allowed none to go out or come in."

"I am satisfied," the Burman now said; "and soon we shall have the remainder of my men returning, crowned with victory, and leading the vile stranger in chains."

Again Behring smiled, and turned away to gaze through the window at the torches beyond on the green, to hide his smiles.

As the Burman had said, the remainder of his troop returned, but not for some hours; and then the fresh body poured into the village, rendering it a scene of great bustle and life. Careless of incommoding the villagers, they swarmed into the houses, eating ravenously all they could get, and then sought repose, which they well needed.

Soon the warriors were quiet in slumber, but in Behring's house the leaders were yet gathered. The room presented quite a picturesque scene. Besides the leader and minor chiefs of the Burmans, Behring and

Kala, with Keintalee, were there ; and with great inward delight, hidden by their serious countenances, they heard of the escape of the brigantine and of the heavy loss of the war-boats. This recital was mixed up with the ever-accompanying amount of Burmese braggadocio ; and forgetful, for the time, of what might meet them on the other side of the pass, and in no unmeasured terms pitying the want of courage in the Arracanese, the Burmese at last retired to sleep. Behring and his chiefs were the last to leave the room, but not before they had enjoyed a subdued laugh among themselves.

In the early part of the following day, the Burmese were wending homewards, carrying only the May-woon's body with them.

Leaving them to pursue their journey, we will still go westward, and have another peep at Ummerapoor. The troop must now be near at hand, and doubtless all in the city are eager to see the prisoners, for to imagine the warriors would return empty-handed amounted almost to treason.

Entering the palace court, extending before the magnificent Lotoo, or council hall, we find but two persons therein, who are intently engaged on a strange amusement. One of the individuals is a giant

of his race, remarkably well fattened, and dressed in the plainest of garbs. The other individual we cannot well mistake; it is the mighty Boa of Burmah, although not decked in his regal robes. But how comes it to pass that the Grand Lord of the White Elephant, and King of all the World, deigns to stand in the presence of a common subject? He on whom the grantees and courtiers dare not look, but lie grovelling in his presence, to be so familiar to the menial. Is the king mad? Surely it might well be thought so, for behold the respective positions of these individuals. Can we believe our eyes? Are they not beholding some ludicrous phantasy of the mind? Can that be the Emperor perched so comfortably on the huge native's plump shoulders, and enjoying the ride on his biped steed?

Reader, we may rub and rub again, until our eyes are sore, but the vision is unaltered. The Boa is thoroughly enjoying his ride, and the native, who is honoured well for his services, carries his royal rider around and around the palace court.

At length, his highness, tired of his favourite sport for the time, carefully alights, and instantly guards, attendants, and umbrella bearers, all before unseen, flock around, and the monarch leaves the court.

Now swarm in the richly dressed courtiers, and take their accustomed places in the council hall, waiting their Boa's gracious appearance. Ranging themselves in their usual positions, on the right hand and left of the lattice-screened throne, they are in all their barbaric splendour of high caps and velvet robes, displaying, too, their chains of rank over their shoulders, but all unarmed—not a weapon, beyond his own, will the tyrant allow near him.

Silence reigns until broken by a sudden crash of music, and instantly, the gilded doors being opened, the grandees and courtiers bend to the earth, striking the floor several times with their foreheads in obeisance to their Emperor. Shembuan is clad in a rich tunic, interwoven with gold, and crowned with a cumbersome, massive helmet of the same precious metal. Apparently pleased with his ride in the court, he has a faint smile playing about his mouth, and his courtiers, as in duty bound, also endeavour to smile ; but something unusually heavy must be at the hearts of all, for the smile is but a ghostly attempt. They seem ill at ease, and no wonder. A warrior has arrived in advance of the main body, and now it is their duty to impart the sad news to the Boa, who is joyfully expecting to have the pleasure of executing



the stranger captain. Perhaps this was partly the cause of his amiability.

The courtiers now advanced, and some, in turns, preceded by long flattering addresses, made the monarch aware of various gifts they had presented him in the shape of holy buildings, flagstuffs, and other such religious erections. Each such intimation of a gift fanned the monarch's good temper, and at length one of the highest grantees approached, bearing his title proudly engraved on the front of his cap. The hearts of all were anxiously beating as he began his address—

“Most excellent, glorious sovereign of the whole world of land and ocean ; the golden glory of thy people ; Lord of the White Elephant, and of all the elephants of the earth ; the Golden Foot ; alone worthy to be adored ; I, thine unworthy subject, kissing the dust under thy glorious feet, have to inform the Sun of the World that the invincible warriors of Burmah have returned.”

The speaker paused, and Shembuan, with his face radiant with smiles, and waving his white contail fan in ecstasy, exclaimed—

“Ah, ah ! now will we have a festival. The wretch

is captured, then ; and his bloodthirsty followers ! Oh, grand shall be the sport ! Go, and let all be prepared !”

Shembuan paused, tired with the impetuosity of his outburst ; but none moved to obey his commands, and darker grew the clouds on their brows.

“ May the Golden Glory shine for ever !” murmured the still kneeling courtier. “ Deign, O king of the world ! to listen whilst I, thy humble slave, detail the result of the expedition.”

“ Speak, then,” exclaimed the Boa, in gracious tones. “ Let me hear how my warriors entrapped the wretch.”

“ Lord of the World !” continued the courtier, “ the Maywoon of Prome heading his brave men met no opposition until they reached the mountain pass, when, lo ! they observed the way blocked by trees, and defended by the well-known Tiger Mask of those parts, and by the stranger himself.”

“ What is this ?” broke in the Boa. “ Then will we have a more glorious sport. The traitor shall be arrayed in his mask. Go on—go on !”

The courtier continued : “ Our invincible warriors spread death amongst the foe, and with triumph passed the barricade.”

“‘The ‘Tiger Mask,’ where is he?’” almost shouted the Boa.

“Great Lord of all the Elephants,” answered the courtier, now trembling, whilst the others nervously glanced towards the court—“O Sun of the Universe,” he continued, “the traitor, aided by a demon, hid himself in the forests, and the warriors, knowing the wish of the Golden Foot, pursued him not, but followed the stranger wretch, who fled in great terror.”

Again he paused. The Emperor spoke not for some seconds, but nervously grasped a long spear leaning against his throne; and the courtiers, who ventured a glance, beheld his countenance darkening with wrathful clouds.

“Go on!” uttered in a deep voice of rage made the trembling courtier continue his narrative—“Thou only object to be adored, the warriors then, with all speed, hastened to the sea-coast. War boats were put off, and they chased the vessel of the stranger.”

“Did he escape?” thundered the Boa, leaning forward as if about to rise.

“Great Monarch! our thunder guns so battered his vessel that no doubt she soon went down in the ocean.”

"Did he escape?" again thundered the Boa, his eyes flashing fiercely, and the courtiers, more uneasy, glanced anxiously towards the courtyard, whilst the trembler before the throne answered—"Father of thy people, aided by demons, who spread their wings to catch the wind, alas, he escaped!"

"Where is the Maywoon? Bring him forth, for he shall suffer for this!" shouted the monarch, starting to his feet and stamping with rage.

The grandees and courtiers dared not move, and the kneeling courtier murmured—

"Prince of princes, he is dead! Slain by the stranger!"

For a few seconds the Boa answered not. Glaring around on the trembling nobles, he gnashed his teeth with rage, and then suddenly stepping from his throne, he raised his clenched hand upward, and with the other grasping his glittering spear he cried with tones of appalling loudness—"The stranger fled! 'Tiger Mask' gone! and the Maywoon slain! Oh ye devils! Ye lying cheats! Thieves and scoundrels begone! begone!"

Down sprang the infuriated monarch, spear in hand. Up started the terrified courtiers and turned

in all directions to flee from their wrathful sovereign, but in their confusion and haste, they tumble pell-mell over one another. Heedless of his massive crown and heavy robes, the monarch sprang at the nearest, who was the unfortunate deliverer of the news. He had turned to flee, but Shembuan's keen spear was plunged into his back, and he fell dead on the hall floor. Striding over the body, and plucking out his blood-stained weapon, the Boa looked around like an infuriated tiger for more, and nimbly sprang towards the courtiers fallen over each other, shouting loudly, "Begone, cheats, thieves, vagabonds!" Shembuan made a lunge, but catching his foot in the long robe of a prostrate noble, he fell with a heavy crash to the floor, grappling with the courtier over whom he stumbled.

Blessing their stars for this fortunate overthrow, the others quickly decamped, and the royal guards and other members of the court came into the assistance of Shembuan, who was soon on his feet, and the unlucky cause of his downfall, no other than Maulong, trembled at his inevitable fate.

"Seize the traitor," cried Shembuan to his guards, who at once seized the Maywoon. "Away with him to the vilest dungeon! Shall the Lord of the World

be defied and mocked in his own palace? Away with him and yonder carrion!" pointing as he spoke to the body of the slain grandee; "let it be given to pariahs, or to the birds of the air; or hurl it in the river for the fishes! Anywhere, but out of my sight."

With wonderful speed, and with sly glances of merriment at each other, the guards obeyed, and the Emperor left the hall. Poor Maulong was hurried away, and confined in a loathsome dungeon, to await the Boa's pleasure. That was soon known. A barbarous tyrant was Shembuan; maddened when opposed or disappointed, and pouring forth his anger on all around, until satiated for the time. Poor Maulong, for whom none dared to plead with the kingly murderer, was cruelly put to death in his dungeon when evening was closing over the capital. Not contented with this, the lifeless body was nailed to a small raft, and launched on the river, to tell all who should see it floating by (a prey to the ravenous fowls of the air), how the Boa punished those who unfortunately thwarted him.

This tragic affair caused no concern amongst the others. Some of the courtiers appeared not again in the Golden Presence for several days. Others were

stripped of honours and degraded, and not a few raised to fill the vacant seats of rank.

And thus lived Shembuan Minderagee Prau, Burmah's Boa ; ruling his people with a sceptre of iron, stained with blood ; crushing them beneath his tyrannous feet, while his heart, if he may be said to possess one, bowed to awful depths in worship before one of the many idols of the world.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SMUGGLER'S HOME.

STILL westward, we must away from Burmah, and hurrying over thousands of broad miles, find ourselves on the south-west coast of Ireland. A bright June day is fast hastening to a close, and we stand on a narrow rocky point, washed by the waves of the broad Atlantic. On our right is an expansive bay, running inland for about five miles, the land to the north projecting far into the ocean, and terminating in a point distant four miles from where we stand. To our left, the land from which our point branches takes a considerable bend inwards, forming a small bay in itself.

At our feet the waves ripple on a sandy beach skirting the jagged base of the point, and on the beach two fishing-boats, of large size, are hauled up with their sails carelessly hanging over their sides. A narrow, slippery path leads from the beach to the point. Standing fourteen feet back from the pre-



capitous ledge is a massive, time-worn, but still substantial round tower, of about twenty or twenty-four feet in circumference at its base, and rising to a height of nearly thirty feet, surmounted by a lofty flagstaff. This ancient tower, built of huge stone blocks, has a low arched door on its eastern side, and is pierced by several narrow windows or embrasures, with a large round aperture near its summit, facing the ocean. It has evidently been somewhat repaired, and apparently is now used as a look-out or lighthouse. Before this aged keep, several fishermen, dressed in picturesque garbs, are gathered, eagerly conversing on some absorbing topic, and occasionally pointing seaward. Leaving them for a time, and looking further into the bay we notice, a mile from this tower, that the land bends abruptly to the north, and in the shelter of this bend are many small but snug-looking fisher huts, with several boats of various sizes on the beach. After some distance the land again extends eastward, and once more bends to the north, and here, rising from an extensive cluster of trees, we notice the roof and turrets of a mansion. Returning to the fishermen before the tower, we find them chiefly elderly, weather-beaten men, although two of the number are

young. One old tanned-faced seaman, having a sou'wester on his head, a blue striped guernsey casing his body, and heavy boots reaching almost to his hips, is leaning against the tower, whilst looking through a telescope, with which he earnestly watches the horizon to the south of the point. The others appear to be waiting a remark from him. At length the glass is lowered.

"She's a stunnin' sailer, and no mistake, boys," said the old man. "When I seed her first, she seem'd on t'other tack, and now she's hauling in hand over hand."

"What do ye make her to be, Jakes?" asked another elderly tar.

"I can't say, chum," returned the first speaker. "Her t'gallant sail is out of water, and that's all. If this nor'-east wind would haul round a point or two, she'd soon be hull ups."

"What brings her in here, slues me, Jakes."

"Ay, ay, Joe," replied Jakes; "and it pauls me, too. Take the glass, Joe, and see what you makes of her."

Joe took the glass, and steadily gazed at the horizon, where the sail was seen. Suddenly he exclaimed: "Why, chum, your binnacle lights want looking to. There's only one craft afloat wants to come in here;

and, hang me, Jakes, but she's a brigantine. May I feed the sharks, if we haven't seen those taut spars afore to-day."

Jakes seized the glass without a word, and after one searching look, he exclaimed : " Right, Joe ; you're right. If that's not Cap'n Harry's craft, I'm not old Jakes—his old father's best hand, rest his soul ! Up with the bunting there, one of you youngsters. Look alive, now ! "

At once one of the younger hands entered the old tower, and the others in turn glanced through the glass, whilst Jakes and his chum, Joe, hurried down to the beach with more agility than their appearance would warrant. They were speedily followed by the others, and as they launched the smaller boat, a large blood-red banner, with fifteen golden balls in the centre, waved from the high tower flagstaff, being a perfect twin with Captain Grasper's own.

In a few minutes the boat's masts were stepped, and the large brown sails hoisted, and away sped the boat towards the brigantine, now rapidly nearing the point. Old Joe's opinion was soon confirmed, and the fishermen saw the long, black hull of the *Saucy Jane*, with her taut spars and heavy sails, sweeping rapidly in. She appeared not so weather-beaten as might

have been expected. The smart mate had been busy scrubbing and painting, and the sweet craft looked as clean as a pink. The fishermen were soon alongside and aboard, and by this time other boats were standing out from the bay.

Those in the village had heard the news, and many stalwart but elderly men, who had seen rough days, were eager to give their young captain a welcome.

By this time the *Saucy Jane* had reached the long stretch of land to the south, and went about on the other tack. She passed the point guarded by the round tower, and now lively with many faces, old and young ; and a quarter of the way between the tower and the village she brought up, dropped anchor, and furled sails. The little village now showed more life than its appearance would lead us to imagine possible, and several boats were around the brigantine, and several fishermen heartily helped in the work on board. Whilst this busy scene was onward, one of the quarter-boats was lowered and manned, the crew being dressed in their neat style, and with only cutlasses in their belts. Captain Harry Grasper soon entered the boat, and the ten long oars propelled her towards the village. Reaching this,

Grasper sprang on shore, and under a shower of recognitions and welcomes from the fishers' wives and little ones, he hurried towards an unpretending looking dwelling, slightly removed from the others, and higher up the bank. In the doorway stood a tall and elderly female of humble appearance, who stepped to meet the captain as he tripped lightly up the bank.

"What cheer, good Norah?" said Grasper, as he warmly seized her hands; "what cheer? It is quite a comfort to see your kind old face again."

"Ah, Master Harry, I give ye good welcome home, but I've sorry tidings for ye," answered the woman.

"I know, I know, Norah," said Grasper, rather sadly; "but let's go within and have a yarn."

"Ye may know a part, Master Harry, but not all, not all; but come ye within," and they both entered the house. On both sides of the passage were small parlours, and in one of these Grasper seated himself on a chair. The room was neatly furnished, and the stone floor sanded with a fine sand. The window, shaded by a snow-white curtain and gay with bright-coloured flowers in their red pots, looked out on the beach. To complete the quietness of the spot, an

old-fashioned clock ticked monotonously in one corner, and a large, sleepy-looking cat came slowly purring up to Grasper. The old domestic, Norah, for such she was, remained standing between Grasper, seated near the fireplace, and the little round table, and for several moments she scanned his weather-beaten but still young face.

"You're changed, Master Harry, but I can't say either in what way. You're more browned, but that is not it. The fire in your eye is altered."

"Well, Norah, perhaps it's that, too," replied Grasper, with a smile; "but tell me of the changes here, for they are many, I know. My good old mother; let me know all particulars."

Norah still remained standing, but said, "Ah! the dear old lady died now seven months come to-morrow. All her talk was of you, Master Harry; but we knew nothing of your whereabouts. She was much altered afore she died, and she died happy."

"Thank God for that," said the captain, with a strange fervour, which made Norah stare, but saying nothing. She then took a seat opposite to him, and with her back to the window, said—"And did they tell ye any more than this, Cap'n Harry?"

"No, Norah, nothing beyond that sister Nelly lives

in the old house and is spliced. Tell me what sort of a man is her husband? I must give them a hail, or I shall be had up by court-martial, I expect, to give an account of myself."

Norah smiled, and then looking grave, said, "Yes, Master Harry, she's married, and a sorry thing it is."

"What do you mean, Norah?"

"Well, Master Harry, not to be tacking about off and on, as you would say, I must tell ye that afore many days are past ye'll have to be aboard and away, for it's an ungracious welcome ye'll meet at the house."

"Strand me! Norah, but you puzzle me. I'm like a spitted shark, can't find any bottom at all. What on earth do you mean? Isn't the house mine; and isn't Nelly my sister?"

"Yes, Master Harry, the house is yours, and Mistress Nelly is your sister; but she don't think so altogether. Now, Harry, stop a minute, and let me clear up this puzzle. When you left the old lands, many long months ago, we had no news from ye, and soon after, Miss Nelly had fallen in with some high, proud fellow—I won't call him a man—and he was taken up, I suppose, with her mother's fine house,

and of course he didn't know she was a sister of Captain Grasper, who everybody knew nearly, and so they made a match. Well, they got on pretty well, but Miss Nelly got very proud, and whenever she came home the poor fishers must never go too close. When mistress was ailing, and Mr. Laury—that's Miss Nelly's husband—found out that you, Master Harry, was at sea, and all the house would be given you from your mother, then they both set to work. News was brought somehow—but I know through their villany—that your vessel was wrecked, and everybody perished. I remember now, they brought some sailor on purpose, who told a yarn about it, and poor mistress took the thing to heart sadly, and fell away very quickly.

“Oh, the black-hearted scoundrel!” exclaimed Grasper, who had so far listened patiently, but now was roused to a pitch of indignation, and had the workers of this villany, or rather Laury, have fallen across him at this moment, he would have rued the day. “Go on, Norah,” said Grasper. “Let me hear all of this black affair. Did mother believe it?”

“Alas! she did, Master Harry; and who can wonder? I would not believe it, for many things had opened my eyes; but poor mistress believed it all,



and then to get her to give all the property to them was easy enough."

"And what was left for you, good Norah?"

"Well, Master Harry, mistress said I must live in the old house, and she gave me some of these cottages, and every one of the old hands had his cottage for himself, and the bits of land, too. Mistress did that for your sake, Master Harry; but when she died, they made me as unhappy as they could, so I left the old house with a heavy heart, surely, and have lived here ever since."

"And the people, Norah; are they left alone?"

"Yes, Master Harry. Mr. Laury did try to annoy them; but he couldn't find nothing against them; they were all quiet fishers, but seldom any go to the house. And now, Master Harry, take old Norah's advice, and don't talk too free up yonder. I'm sure when Mr. Laury knows you're home he'll do all he can to harm you; and there's danger, I fear; but every man here is honest, and loves ye well."

"I know it, I know it, Norah, and set your heart at rest," said Grasper. "I must go and see Nelly for myself; but keep your ears and eyes open, Norah. You may find out what I may not. As for the danger, I don't care a rope-yarn for it. I know all ashore here

are honest and true, and my lads aboard are as brave and true to the backbone as any that ever trod a plank. Now I'm off. Old Jakes will give you all the news I know ; for he's heard all by this time, and you'll have a swarm of the lads ashore. You see they are attended to yourself, and give doctor and the mate lodgings. Now, good-bye for the time, and I'll be back soon and give you the yarn myself, for I've a rare cargoe to unload to ye."

"Now, Master Harry, take care and don't lose your temper, and be using that sharp cutlass."

"Oh, never fear, Norah," exclaimed Grasper, smiling, as he moved towards the door, "never fear. I'm not so fond of using it as I once was ; people change, you know. Good-bye once more, and here goes for the lion's den."

Grasper hurried down to the beach, and his men seeing him coming launched the boat and took their places.

"Give way, lads, give way, and show them a bit of shipshape pulling now," said the captain as he seized the tiller ; and the men, with well-timed strokes, shot the boat further in the bay towards the mansion.

The house, as Norah called it, is a large and fine

looking mansion, standing in a grove of lofty trees now in full leaf. A very extensive lawn extends almost to the water's edge, and the bank being rather elevated, a small, slender and elegant looking quay extends from the foot of the lawn into the bay. Here a boat, fancifully rigged as a yacht, is held by a painter. The smugglers ran their boat close to the steps, and jumping out, Grasper bade some of the crew to follow him, and then hastened up the lawn.

Not a single creature was to be seen, and nothing about the stately house to betoken life; but Grasper stepped within the porch, and as he threw open the massive door he said to his men—"Go round the stern, Harding, and I dare say you'll see some old faces to give you good cheer."

The men obeyed, and Grasper entered a spacious hall. By this time evening was well set in; but there was still a good light, the sun not yet sunk to rest, but a calm feeling, a listless tone pervading sea and land, and air. As the captain entered the hall, and saw before him the well remembered grand old staircase, and on either side of him the numerous apartments, a well-dressed footman, evidently aroused by the opening door, hastily approached, saying—"Excuse me, sir, but there is some mistake here." This he

said with a pompous air ; to which Grasper replied—  
“ Mistake, fellow, ay, I guess there is. You’re a fresh hand, I can see, or you’d have known the master of this place, and been a little more civil. Where’s your mistress ?”

The servant was completely puzzled ; but before he could answer, one of the side apartments opened, and a young but richly dressed lady came out. “ I thought I knew the voice, Harry ! and so you are back to the old place, all safe again ?”

“ Eh, Nelly, lass,” exclaimed Grasper, and turning, he greeted his sister warmly, making her exclaim—  
“ Ugh, Harry, you squeeze like a bear. Now, come in.”

“ Let the flunkeys look to my lads, Nell ; they are in-doors by this time.”

The captain at once entered the handsome room, much more luxuriously fitted up than when he last saw it. His sister remained to direct the footman, and then, suppressing an evident inward struggle, she followed Grasper. The room was of great length, and at the extreme end were two persons. Grasper at once surveyed them from a distance, when the gentleman advanced. “ This is my husband, Harry,” said the sister, and the men shook

hands. Laury was tall, thin, foppishly dressed; handsome in countenance, but with a strange look in his black eyes, which Grasper liked not at all. At first all went well. The other lady, introduced as a visitor, left the apartment, and Nelly and Laury, sitting on each side of Grasper, kept up a gay and agreeable conversation, and many questions were asked. Had Grasper been less shrewd, he would have been deceived, and have attributed Norah's remarks to unkindness; but he knew her faithfulness too well to have a doubt, and as he talked in a lively manner, although unnoticed, he narrowly watched the effect of his remarks.

He very briefly asked about his mother, and received as brief an answer from his sister with well affected seriousness. "I see, Nelly, the fellow I met in the hall is a stranger. Have many of the old hands gone?"

"Yes, Harry," said she. "I suppose they did not like new masters, and so left?"

"And old Norah, too, has she gone for good?"

"Gone, too, Harry, and for the same reason," replied the lady.

"But, sister, you're not strange to them, eh?"

"No, it's not that, Harry; it's because the management was new."

"Well, Nelly, I shall have a cruise around the old place before it's quite dark. You are coming, Laury? We must have all the old hands back again if we can, Nell."

As he spoke, Grasper rose and walked to the window, but he noticed the quick looks husband and wife threw at each other at his last remark. Nelly's face was momentarily clouded, and on her husband's lip a sneer curled, but nothing escaped Grasper. At once Laury arose, and the two men left the room, to "cruise about," as Grasper intended.

Before the night closed, without any open intimation from Grasper, they could plainly see he had come back as master. Keeping Harding and another hand with him, the captain sent back the boat's crew to the village, and soon retired to his old room for the night, leaving his sister and Laury down. Long and earnest was their conversation; both brows darkened, and anger and wounded pride lurked in each heart, while Nelly, easily led, was swayed by the influence of her black-hearted husband.

Early the next day, Grasper was out and speeding up the bay to his vessel. That day was a busy one.

Boats, well manned, had been early sent off, and messengers also sent inland; and towards nightfall the lugger, and many of the large fishing-boats well loaded and manned, sailed out of the bay. Late in the night they returned, ready for fresh loads. Grasper had all well arranged, and his cargo was thus sent to men ever ready to receive. And he had a good reason for this dispatch; he had seen enough in his sister's conduct and in Laury to make him watchful. A small company of smugglers were lodged in the round tower, and every night armed men watched in the village. At the House Grasper took up his abode; but, in consideration of his sister, he allowed no one but Davis and the doctor to be there, except the crew of his boat. The people of the village now found their way often to the House, and old Norah was apparently installed once more in her old quarters, and was in constant attendance on Master Harry, as she called Captain Grasper.

Days passed in this manner. The cargo was all out and disposed of, and the mate now employed the men in setting the brigantine in order, and repairing what had been damaged in her voyage. At the House matters were getting of greater importance. So far, Grasper had refrained from any open con-

versation with Laury and his wife. Being the true owner of the place and village, he had settled at once into his old ways, and now looked at Nelly as he ever did. During his short stays at home in his mother's lifetime, although master, he had acted as a visitor, and under his mother had Nelly conducted the management of all. In the same manner Grasper acted now. Conducting himself almost as a visitor, he allowed his sister to manage and order all as if she had been sole mistress; but in his manner at times, and in his occasionally wishing her to have this or that to be seen to, they could have no doubt whatever of his intentions. But not a word had he breathed of his mother being so cruelly deceived by them about his fate. Before Grasper the conduct of Laury and Nelly was all that was amiable and kind.

One morning the captain was up almost with the dawn, and with his hands thirst in his jacket pockets and his brown, massy hair fanned by the morning breeze, he smoked his pipe, whilst walking in the extensive park-like gardens in the rear of the house. Footsteps approaching made him turn, and he saw Norah coming towards him.

"The top of the morning to ye, Norah," said he, amusingly, as he removed his pipe. "Eh, what's



in the wind now?" he continued, as he saw her grave face.

Norah replied not, but leading him further away from the house, at last said, "Ah! Master Harry, there's foul play in the wind; I thought what would happen to ye. Now, listen to me. I've kept my eyes and ears open, as ye bid, and I've seen the storm brewing; but never did I dream it was so black."

"Come, Norah, out with it," said Grasper, whose pipe was now thrust into his pocket. "You don't croak, I know well; so out with it."

"Well, Master Harry, last night when you were asleep, and everybody else almost, I overheard Mr. Laury and Miss Nelly talking. He was in a great rage, and said he'd see if a smuggler, and one on whose head a price was set, should hunt him out of house and home. Miss Nelly first begged him not to talk so harsh, but he stormed very much, and asked her if she would like the world to know she was Captain Grasper's sister. And so, Master Harry, she gave way, and more so when Mr. Laury said his plan would only make you go to sea, and that would be the only damage done."

"And how did he think to do that, Norah?" asked Grasper, smiling.

"Well, Master Harry, he said that before another day passed he would go himself and let some magistrate and coastguard know where to find you; and then he said, laughing, you would soon be scared to sea again."

"So, so, brother Laury," exclaimed Grasper, stamping his feet and clenching his fist, "so, so; that's your game, is it? Well, we'll see who's the best man; and may old *Jane* founder, and I be laid on my beam-ends, if I don't put a mark on that fox's face of yours."

"Now, Master Harry, don't be hasty," said Norah; "bide your time. See if he goes to-day, and get your men all in readiness."

"Trust me, trust me, good Norah! My blood may be hot at times, and is it any wonder at such devilry—one's own sister to turn a Judas, and sell me to the gallows! Ah, Norah, I want no more disturbances. I'm growing tired of bloodshed and running cargoes, but if they beard me in my own den, I have bold hearts and keen blades to meet them, and before I leave the old bay its waters shall

be dyed with blood, or I'm not Harry Grasper the smuggler, as they choose to call me. Now go, good Norah, and let me cool down a bit."

Norah left him alone, and for a long time Grasper walked moodily in the garden, and his manly face was clouded over. Suddenly pausing in his walk, he said aloud, "Strand me! old Momien, but you spoke gospel when you said, 'Idolatry lurks in the heart, and there are more Shoodagons than one in the world.' Ah, well, it ever has been, and ever will be, I suppose."

Grasper now returned to the house, and meeting Nelly, his first question was for Laury. "Oh, Harry, he has been obliged to go away suddenly on business, but expects not to be back for a day or two," said the sister, all smiles, and playfully sticking a flower in his jacket. Grasper could scarcely keep from turning away in a rage, but he mastered himself, and said—

"Well, Nell, I have work to do as well, and after breakfast I must have a look at my old craft; she's the best wife a man can have, after all."

A few hours later, and the brigantine was like a hive swarming with bees; fishing-boats left empty and returned laden with water and provisions; and

men crowding the rigging, and over the sides, were working with unusual energy. When evening threw the village into shade, and the lights gleamed from the windows of the humble cots, many an old but stout-hearted and still strong-armed smuggler might be seen within, taking down the heavy cutlasses and large pistols that had long hung idle over the hearth, but were now examined with care, and brightened up. A stronger force watched in the round tower, and heavily-armed tars paced the deck of the *Saucy Jane*.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HOME ON THE SOUNGARI.

THE sun was fast hastening down on one of the sweetest scenes earth can present to man. The broad Soungari rolled lazily on its course. Standing on a low bank, thick with high tangled grass and trailing plants, and under the friendly shade of a single lofty and stately birch tree, we watch the grand river flowing steadily around the bend on which we stand. Away to our right, across the stream, nearly a mile in width, a lofty rocky hill descends to the water, and at its sides the low banks are clothed with thick trees, among which some dwellings may be dimly descried. From this hill, the opposite bank extends as far as the eye can reach, gently sloping to the stream, and in the rear rises the far distant range of blue hills forming a majestic background to the whole scene. The river is dotted with islands. But a few yards from the point we speak of, and right ahead is one, round in shape, high banked and covered with a

cluster of high, thick trees. Halfway between us and the hill across the river is another round islet, larger but lower, and alike bearing rich masses of foliage. At almost equal distances up the stream are two others of similar size and shape. The sun, veiled by a bank of light clouds, floods the whole scene with a rich mellow tint. Near the distant hills, the sky looks like the firmament at sunset, streaked with yellow, and the same tint, in parts deepening to a faint crimson, has nestled on hills, trees, and water, whilst the bright leaves of the birch trees and rich olive-green and brown of the tangled grass beneath our feet add unspeakable richness to the noble scene.

The eye would fain linger, and watch the sun go down behind yon distant hills, and see the rapidly changing tints, succeeded by the cold grey of night, but we must not, for near us is something of even more interest. A long, frail canoe alongside the bank is being unfastened by a man. He is dark-skinned, and dressed in a strong leather tunic, with leggings and moccasins casing his feet, these, with a small close cap of fur, with a flap falling over his neck, complete the simple but picturesque costume of the hunter. At his back is slung a long and richly finished rifle. In

the canoe are several skins and portions of a deer, no doubt the produce of the chase. Unfastening the canoe, he steps lightly in, and pushing off the frail vessel, seizes a short paddle, and propels it with great swiftness across the noble stream. Passing below the first island he glides across, and the canoe grounds on the beach to the right of the hill. Here were other canoes of a larger size, fitted with masts, and moored to strong posts driven into the shallow bed of the river, at the bank.

Mooring his canoe, the hunter now sprang ashore, and throwing the skins and portion of the deer over his shoulder, stepped lightly up the bank.

The trees on this side of the river extend in parallel groves right to the water's edge, and between each grove, like natural hedges, are wide tracts of gently rising land, covered with thick, luxuriant grass and shrubs. The open space up which the hunter now hastened was bordered on one side by the lofty hill, and on the other by one of the thick groves, and the scene which opens to one coming, as the hunter did, from the river-side, is one of fairy beauty. At a distance of several yards from the river, the hill shoots forth a jagged spur, half way across the plain, and in

the shelter of this giant bend, standing out from a background of dark green trees, a group of strong, wood-built buildings arrests the eye. It is, in fact, a tiny village, containing no more than a dozen small, compact dwellings, clustering around, but respectfully distant from one of larger size, facing the river. To our right, as we approach the dwellings, are large tracts of fenced and cultivated land, and small, active horses crop the rich grass, while numerous cattle browse on the plains far behind the spur.

As the hunter neared the large dwelling, a female form appeared in the entrance. She, too, was dark-skinned, but not so dark, and, though dressed in a different garb, we cannot mistake those sweet features, nor that jet-black hair, combed so neatly back. Had we any doubt of the matter, it is quickly dispelled, for the female running to meet the hunter and his load, lovingly greets him with a kiss, exclaiming—"Dear Aungua, how glad am I that you are home again. The hours have been so long. And Momien, too, will be glad."

"Domea, my own wife, I have been somewhat long, but the deer have been more timid to-day;



perhaps because I was more anxious and hasty, but I am successful. And how is Momien, dear Domea?"

The two now moved towards the hut as Domea replied—"I think he is better, Aungua. He is so cheerful and willing to depart; but, oh, I pray the Lord will spare him to us yet longer."

"That is my heart's prayer, dear one; but we cannot sorrow if good Momien is taken home."

They had now reached the dwelling, and Loo, meeting them, helped to receive the hunter's spoils, and, assisted by a native woman, hurried away to prepare it. The house was very similar to Momien's old home at Kemmendine, but large and comfortable. The walls and doors were very strong. The entrance door opened into a large room, used as a dining-hall. This was remarkably cheerful looking and light. Right and left, doors led to other apartments, and a passage at the back to the busiest part of the dwelling, the more domestic portion, in which Loo reigned. The door of the apartment to the right was open, and a well-known voice met Aungua's ears as he entered the hall. He stepped at once within. Good old Momien was there, seated in an arm-chair, facing an open window; and that

chair, we know, came from the *Saucy Jane's* stern-cabin. The room is simply but yet comfortably furnished, and a door leads to a sleeping apartment beyond.

"I am thankful you are back, Aungua," said Momien slowly, but not rising from his chair, he being now an invalid; "I like to have you all around me, my son, for I feel I shall not be long with you."

"The Lord may spare you to us longer, good father," replied Aungua, as he seated himself near the old pilgrim. "How have you been in my absence?" continued Aungua.

"I have felt better, Aungua—much better—and Domea, the dear child, has been singing me cheering words. I have been watching the sweet sky; and the sun must be nearly set now, Aungua, is it not?"

"Yes, good Momien, and the scene is indeed beautiful. Nowhere could we have chosen such a peaceful home, or where we could see so much of the majestic beauties of earth."

"True, true, Aungua," answered Momien, musingly. "Does it not seem to you, Aungua, that in our seeking this sweet place, away from danger and treachery, it is like the happy home my soul

feels each day nearing ? And this calm evening, too, is it not like the gentle close of my pilgrimage ?”

“It is indeed, dear Momien ; but, oh ! how happy it will be for you to remain with us longer, and watch the first springing from the seed we are now hopefully sowing in this new land.”

“Nay, my boy, I feel differently. My life has been long and varied. Yours is the work here. You have nobly put forth the wealth which the captain so nobly gave you. This little village, is it not all yours ? The little band of hunters, poor before you gave them their dwellings, have they not learned to love you already ? Strangers to them, they see in every act you both love them and seek their good. Domea’s gentle, kind manner has won the hearts of all ; and your skill and bravery, my boy, have won their admiration. The work is yours, Aungua. With Domea, the Lord may have a long race for you to run, and from these few hunters and their families your influence will spread to the villages where you carry the fruit of your hunting. Strong in the Lord, a noble work is before you ; but me the Lord calls home. Unworthily though I have laboured for Him, the merits of my Saviour will insure me a crown of life. But, Aungua, one thought disturbs me. What

has become of our noble friend, the captain? Has he taken to heart the subject of our serious conversation, and been moved to seek the Lord, and to turn unto Him by a hearty repentance? Oh! if I could but hear this answered, how happy should I be!"

"We will believe it, good father—we must believe it!" answered Aungua; and before more could be said, Domea and Loo entered, bringing some smoking meat which they had been preparing; but Momien ate very little, and tears filled Domea's eyes as she glanced at Aungua supporting the old man.

Age had not thus brought the pilgrim down. True, he was old and had seen strange vicissitudes in life, but they seemed more to invigorate than weaken him. It was the arrow-wound which he had received in the pass of Yumadong from which he now suffered. The voyage in the brigantine had revived him to a wonderful extent, but when away from the sea air, and undergoing the fatigue of travel, the wound became bad again, and nothing now could save him. Aungua was, however, untiring in his exertions to procure nourishing food for him, and none of the hunters returned without bringing some little prize for Momien, and earnestly asking after him.

This cast a deep gloom over the happy home—a

shadow which deepened each day, as they saw him gradually fading. The usual employment of the day was interrupted. It was their practice at sunrise for Aungua and Domea, she on his own steed and he on another, to gallop inland for great distances ; and soon after their return, Aungua would away, in company with the brave band of hunters, and crossing the broad river, would scour the dense forests and climb the hills in quest of game. Then at the close of day they would return, sometimes singly and sometimes in little groups, and happily did the evenings pass. Aungua did this not for gain, but that in the trading months he might take his heaps of skins, and with the others, sail northward in company with trading boats from many miles. Nearly at the mingling of the Soungari and the Amoor, they would barter their skins. By this means Aungua extended his knowledge and his influence.

But now, in Momien's illness, he went to the forests only to procure anything the old Christian relished ; the early rides, too, were discontinued, and their hearts were heavy. They could not but rejoice in the hope that their kind old teacher and guardian was going to a pure, sinless home of unfading glory and happiness ; but to miss his kind voice and his cheering smile, to

hear no more his fervent prayers or his earnest tone in reading the Scriptures, ah ! that did indeed cast a shadow over their hearts.

Only a few days after the conversation we have just been listening to, and as the sun was going down behind the hills, while the river was bathed in crimson and the clouds in gold, in the hunter's home were great hurryings to and fro. Females' eyes were wet with tears, and manly voices hushed to whispers. Aungua's home contained nearly all of the hunters belonging to the village. Momien's room was an affecting scene. The old pilgrim was reclining in his chair, and on either side Aungua and Domea, the latter weeping, were kneeling and holding his hands. Near them was Loo, and on both sides stood several skin-clad, strong, but brown-skinned hunters, taking a strange interest in this scene. On Momien's knees was his Bible, and glancing from it to the open window and the grandly tinted sky, he spoke with a slow, but unwavering voice—

“My sun is going down fast, dear children, and whilst I have a little strength let me speak a few parting words. And you, too, dear friends, draw closer.” The hunters obeyed, and Momien continued, “Hear an old man's words. I have lived long, and

seen much. I have travelled over wide parts of the earth. I sought happiness, but for many weary years in vain. But, blessed be God, the helper of my life and the salvation of my spirit, at length I found it. 'Twas in a narrow path ; few ever care to tread that path, for it offers nothing grand or wealthy here. Those who travel thereon live for their God, not for self. They know themselves unworthy and unprofitable, but they look to One for their salvation. There is but one God, dear friends—Buddha, Confucius, and all those gods, as men call them, are snares. There is but One, He who stretched out yon sky above us, He who placed the bright sun to shine on earth, and who gave the earth its beauty. He, dear friends, who made us. There is but One God, and from Him we have departed, and thus departed from happiness ; and without holiness we can never see Him, and to see Him is happiness eternal. Unbounded is His love, unfathomable His mercy, and His blessed Son died that we might through Him have access to the Father. This Son of God, dear friends, is the way. Oh ! learn of Him. Lift up your voice, not to images of wood or stone, not to dreams, but to Him who made the bright sun, and the earth, and us. Ask the Giver of Life for wisdom, for happiness, for life—and you shall

have it. I go, dear friends—perhaps not yet—but I go. With a happy heart I look forward. I have trusted Him in life, and can trust Him now. No doubts, no fears—I am ready to depart !”

Momien paused, and the hunters, who had before heard the old Christian expounding the Word of God, looked with surprise at him now near the river of death ; but his face was radiant with smiles and his eye gleaming bright with faith. Turning to Aungua and Domea, he said, “ And you, my dear children, I leave to the Lord. You know the truth. Go on looking only to Him. As a father I have loved and cared for you, and our loving Master now will give you grace. Weep not, dear daughter, but praise Him who leaves not his old servant, but is ever near.

“ Should the captain return, and I feel he will, tell him how I have thought of him and prayed for him. Tell him he must spend his days with you, and that I am only going before. And say, Aungua, my son, that old Momien repeats what he said when we parted—in the heart idolatry lurks. In the fair homes in the west, where the captain has gone, are more Shoodagons than in our blighted land of Burmah. Forget not this, my children, but seek to set all your affections on our blessed Lord. Love not this nor that which



may win you from Him. Enter on no pursuit which will tend to lead you away. Keep yourselves from idols, or the Lord in wrath will break them down, and blot out the idolater's name from the Book of Life. And, dear children, hold fast the truth. You are yet young, and sorrows will come and temptations with them, that at times you will think you cannot be the children of the Highest. And these times will increase as you grow older. Those who are strong in the Lord will be more fiercely assaulted by the tempter ; but the Lord will hedge you around. Though stripped of all, cling to Him, and, oh ! what joy shall crown us at the end !

“Now my soul feels bathed in glory rays. At evening time there shall be light ! Every promise of the Saviour I have found true, and this, oh ! how true is it ! Yon sky grows darker over our earth, but I see rays gilding the east. The bright morning star is there, and, oh ! how dazzling are the rays of the coming sun !”

As though he beheld the approaching glory, the old Christian covered his eyes with one hand, and then gently murmured, “The faithful and the true. A pillar in the temple of my God, I shall go no more out. See that bright path across the river ! Those

pearly gates are opened wide ! Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Like the voice of many waters I hear their songs ! ‘To the Lamb who was slain ! Glory ! glory ! glory !’ ” The old pilgrim’s voice had paused between each broken sentence, and as Aungua, bending nearer, caught the last faint word, the old man’s hand dropped and he was in a deep, calm slumber.

“He sleeps,” said Aungua, in a whisper as he rose to his feet. “Leave him awhile, brave friends,” and the hunters quietly left the room, whilst Aungua went to Domea still kneeling. “Dear one,” he whispered, “seek a little rest. He is but slumbering, and I will remain here and call you should he awake soon, or any change take place.”

“No, no, dear Aungua, do not ask me. I must watch with you. How calmly he sleeps !”

They remained in the dusk, and when the evening was more advanced a light was placed in the room ; but so that it was not glaring on Momien, who slumbered still. There sat the young husband and his wife, whispering together, and now and again listening to the old pilgrim’s breathing. Two silent solemn hours of watching had thus passed, when a deep sigh from the sleeper brought them to his side.

Momien's eyes unclosed not—he awoke not—for from the calm sleep his soul had passed the river ; gone to an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away!

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On the second day after Momien's death none of the hunters left the little village for their wonted journeys ; but towards the close of day a strange procession left Aungua's dwelling. Six sturdy sons of the forest, clad in their neat hunting dresses, and with their rifles slung at their backs, raised the rude coffin in which Momien's body lay, and followed by Aungua, Domea, Loo, and the other hunters, and indeed nearly all the dwellers in that secluded spot, they slowly crossed the tract of land and bent their steps towards the nearest grove of trees. It was a sad, silent march, until they reached a gentle knoll, on which stood a low branched, but thickly wooded tree, some few yards from the grove itself. Under the shelter of this sentinel of the forest, standing in full view of the dwellings, a grave had already been prepared.

The hunters rested their burden on a heap of large stones at the grave's foot, and Aungua spoke a few solemn words and knelt in prayer. It was strange to see those natives, who worshipped other gods, now bending their knees as the young Burman Christian

lifted up his voice to the only true God. They had already learned to love the strangers—for goodness and bravery ever will win love and respect ; and daily roaming the free forests and wild mountains they had imbibed a spirit of kindness and liberality.

Rising, as Aungua ended his fervent prayer, the hunters lowered the coffin, and after a last look into the cold grave, they hastily poured in the earth, and then piled up the huge stones as a protection from wild beasts, and covered the whole with a layer of earth. This done, they returned to the village, leaving Domea sitting at the foot of Momien's grave, and Aungua with his hunting knife carving nothing but the name of "Momien" on the tree shadowing the lonely grave, to tell the wayfarer of the Christian resting there. Soon they both returned to their home.

For many days they felt Momien's loss keenly, and Aungua went not hunting with the others. Their hope now was one day to see the captain return.

Time flew onward. The sadness in a degree wore off, and smiles again decked Domea's face, and Aungua's too, although clouds came when they thought of the past. The hunters were collecting

many skins, and when the season came round and the largest boats were prepared, they followed Aungua's advice, and sent only some of their party to trade, leaving others to protect their homes from marauding bands. And more readily did they put themselves under his guidance, when he threw all his hunting spoils with their lot, but took no return.

Where once they were stragglers, they now lived and sometimes hunted in a body, and the benefits of this brotherhood were soon evident; for marauders, who abounded, cared not to molest the little community of brave men; and if one needed help, they had many helpers. Thus the time sped. Aungua's influence with the hunters, and Domea's in their homes, rapidly extended, and took deeper root. In truth, few places on earth could be so happy as their home on the Soungari.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE CRUMBLING IDOL.

"No, no, Norah, I'm not going to heave up and away in a hurry. Laury shall curse the day, ay, and so shall Nell, too, that ever they crossed my hawse. Had they been kind, and Nell acted as a sister, they wouldn't have come badly off. Stop in the place, I never quite intended, for I know it'll soon be too hot, but I'd have given her a share fit for a princess; but, strand me, Norah, this villany has paulled that altogether, and if they get as much as a rope-yarn or a scupper nail, you may blow the *Saucy Jane* out of the water."

"Ah, Master Harry, if I could only prevail on ye to go and save all this blood being spilt——"

"Say no more! say no more! You've never had a cross word from me, and never shall, but don't try any more. My mind's made up, Norah, and it will take the best men in the land to stop Harry Grasper from his purpose when he has determined."

This was said in a stern, determined tone, and Grasper, pacing the little room in Norah's house in the village, kept constantly looking down to the beach. Norah was seated near the window, but a sad look was on her face, and she knew it was useless attempting to turn the smuggler from his purpose. Suddenly pausing in his restless walk, and laying one hand on the table, Grasper said with a smile, and in a calmer tone—

"I'll tell you what I intend to do, Norah ; Laury's friends can't come within a few miles and I know nothing of it ; but I guess he'll be back first. Now I'm not going to blow up all at once, but just do as if I had no guess of what's onward, and sleep at the house as afore. I know what they'll want, and that's first get hold of the craft ; and I've a plan will make them feel out of sorts, I reckon."

"Don't sleep at the house, Master Harry, on no account," said Norah, with great anxiety in her tone.

"Yes, I shall, Norah—no fear about that ; and what's more, I'll clew up matters pretty sharp. Every scrap of that place is mine. The *Saucy Jane* wants a cargo. I'll gather up the stuff and the cash, and I know how much of that is there. My old father

always kept his wealth in handy things, ready to be aboard in case of squalls. When I've all the stuff aboard, and given the comers a taste of good play, I'm off, and you shall go, too, Norah."

"No, no, Master Harry, I'm not going to sea in my old age. I shall stop; but won't this affair put those who remain behind in danger?"

"No fear of that," replied Grasper. "I'll manage so that they shan't be seen having a hand in the matter."

"But supposing the coastguard and the others get the best of it?"

"Get the best of it," replied Grasper, laughing loud, "you're dreaming, Norah. Let them come, as many as can muster, I've to meet them in my own craft near eighty hands; and here ashore you've got more than fourscore huts, and in every one a man, sometimes two, and all well up in this sort of game, and hailing me as skipper. Ah! ah! Norah, we'll have a feast ready, and no fear!"

Norah shook her head, but replied not, whilst Grasper continued—"I'm off to the house. Laury's been gone three days now, and he'll be back, I guess, so I'm off."

The captain was correct in his surmises, for Laury



had returned that very day, and had a long private conversation with his wife. His eyes were twinkling with delight, and as soon as they were alone and saw none within earshot, he said—

“The wind blows fair, Nelly, and we’ll soon be rid of our visitor.”

“What arrangements have you made?” asked Nelly.

“Well, I have settled upon this. A strong force of men are in the neighbourhood ready at a message from me to come down. I must be at home at least a day or two, that your fine brother may not fancy that we are the cause.”

The wife was hurt at this allusion to her relationship with Grasper, but she said nothing concerning it, and replied—“He suspects nothing now, but should he do so, Laury, nothing will check his fury. Had you not better be prepared for the worst, and quietly remove our most valuable things?”

“I see no need,” answered he; “he will have no time to wreak his rage on us. The force will overpower him and his men.”

“Ah, Laury, I have my doubts,” said Nelly; “you do not know Harry as I do, and though with you I want to see him gone and our property here safe, I

tremble lest he should discover it, or be the victor, and so vent his rage on us."

"I have no such fears, Nelly," said her husband ; "but it would not be unwise to be on our guard. I will make private arrangements ; have all our vehicles in readiness, and as soon as the assault begins, away with our valuables, and put you beyond danger."

A few other matters were settled upon, and when Grasper arrived he was received with all smiles as before, and Laury apologized for his absence, which he said was caused by urgent business ; he thought they must soon remove to their own residence. In this manner they talked cunningly, as if to show their perfect understanding that Grasper was owner, and they but visitors. He acted with remarkable adroitness, and completely threw them off their guard. As if to make matters more decided, Nelly playfully said—"What would you wish for dinner to-day, Harry ? You are like a polite visitor."

"Well, Nell, my lass," returned he, "you know I was always the same ; do what you fancy yourself ; but there's one thing I want done. My lads have been asking for a regular day for all of them, and I've 'given leave for as many as like to take the boats, barring my own and her crew ; and they are going off,

heaven knows where, for a regular jolly trip, and I want you to get all hands here at work, and cook them up a few things."

"And when will they go, Harry; when must I get the things ready?"

"Oh, they're off as it gets dusk; going to take spare sails for tents, and make a night of it, and be back somewhere to-morrow."

Laury had been listening eagerly to this, and said—"It's no wonder your crew like you, captain. You study their pleasure before your own, but you do not mean that all are going?"

"Well, when I say all, Laury, I mean all but two or three hands to look after the craft, and my own boat's crew, except Harding, for he'll go to keep them in order. Some in the village are off, too, I believe; but those who stop will keep the craft from tumbling overboard."

"If they are going so soon, Harry, I must bustle about preparing;" and Nelly left the room.

Grasper then turned to Laury, saying, "You said just now, Laury, about shifting to your own house. No need altogether to do that, if you like the old spot. I tell you what I'll do now. Nell is my sister, and the lass must have a share. I've seen too much

of the sea to care about keeping ashore long, so I intend taking all the moveables from the old place, or most of them aboard with me ; and I'll give Nell the house and the grounds belonging to it, so there's no need for you to shift at all. You're welcome here, and I dare say I sha'n't stop many weeks. As soon as my lads are back to-morrow, I'll see about shifting the traps out. No thanks, no thanks, Laury. You can chat with Nell, and I'm going out to have a smoke in the breeze a bit."

Grasper went into the garden through the glass-doors at the back, leaving Laury amazed. He gazed after the retreating form of the giant smuggler, as he slowly walked down the pretty grounds, and for some moments his thoughts were in a whirl. Grasper's kindness completely astounded him, and he saw that he had acted with precipitate haste. The armed force to take the smuggler cannot now be checked, neither can he tell Grasper the danger. What was to be done? Then the thought of the captain's avowed intention of taking away all the property he could ! This would leave Laury well-nigh a beggar, for he had not a shred himself ; a cunning fortune-hunter, he could not thus easily resign his prey. No, the die was cast. To let events take their course and

carry out his first plans, would save house, valuables, and all, and expel the smuggler entirely. This he now determined on, and no time could be better than the coming night, when the brigantine would be all unprotected, and Grasper without his crew.

Laury now left the apartment and sought his wife. Soon after this, Grasper in his stroll entered the spacious stable-yard, and saw a man leave on horseback just as he came in. He guessed his errand.

Later in the day one of the young fishermen desired to speak with the captain, and after a brief interview he left again. Nothing unusual was seen in Grasper's appearance, and towards evening both Laury and Nelly went in his boat to see the sailors off on their trip. A night trip was unusual to their refined habits, but it appeared a matter of course to the tars. They took the large fishing-boats instead of the brigantine's, as first intended, and after much noisy preparation, the boats hoisted sail and left the bay. From the deck of the *Saucy Jane*, the captain, Laury, his wife, with the mate and doctor, saw them go off.

Laury scanned the brigantine, and rather minutely observed her guns and long swivel. Everything was

as trim as possible, and had he been anything of a nautical character, he would have noticed tackles on deck, and things ready for weighing anchor. He smiled as he saw the sailors who remained, little over a dozen, leaning over the bulwarks, and watching their jovial comrades in the distance.

The captain returned with his relatives to the house, as they supposed for the night, leaving the mate on board.

Night came on. It was a very dark night, but just as the twilight deepened into gloom, another messenger sought the captain. And soon after, whilst in the house all was merry and Nelly did all in her power to keep Grasper engaged, two men of his boat's crew pulled rapidly to the brigantine, and to her yardarm a light was quickly run up, which could be seen seaward. This done, the men returned to the house.

In a very short time after the light was hoisted, the boats containing the jovial party glided alongside the brigantine. Veiled by the dense gloom, the men clambered silently on deck, and the light was hauled down. On shore the hut windows were gleaming with the lights within, but, one after another, the doors quietly opened and shut again, and dark forms

glided towards the beach, and with little noise put off to the brigantine, whilst others crept towards the round tower on the point.

At the house all went merrily, and Grasper, feigning fatigue, went early to his room. Fastening the door, he examined the pistols, which had been under his shirt all the day, and thrust his heavy cutlass into its leathern socket at his side. This done, he extinguished the light, and having fastened one end of a long rope to a secure place, he cautiously opened the window, and, listening for a moment, seized the stout line and descended to the ground. Hastening through the dark to the quay, he there found his boat's crew in readiness, and stepping in, the boat was urged up the bay, with long, silent strokes. Reaching the *Saucy Jane*, Grasper boarded and found the deck thronged with his armed men, and with those from the village. He remained only a few moments, and several whom he selected, to the number of fifty stalwart fellows, lowered themselves into the boats alongside. Among them were Harding, old Jakes and Joe, all heavily armed with muskets, besides their usual arms.

Giving full directions to the mate, Grasper ended by saying, in a low tone, "Don't forget, Davis,

when you see the light hoisted, stop firing at once, and keep the lads in hand. If the light dips once, over the side with half smartly ; if she dips twice, man the windlass at once. I wont slip and lose an anchor for those curs. Look after the craft, Davis ; you've enough hands here to drive Satan overboard."

"My life for her safety, Captain Grasper," replied the mate, and the smuggler chief followed his sturdy band.

Right abreast the brigantine, lying close into the shore, was a wide shelving beach, at a bend in the point ; the high rocks sloping considerably, making a complete road but steep. Up this path Grasper was soon leading his band, and then to the massive tower where some smugglers were already gathered. Here they were a mile from the village, but scarcely a quarter of one from the brigantine ; but neither could be seen in the darkness. Nearly an hour after Grasper had left the house, through its back entrance entered several men, in coastguard uniform, and on the lawn a strong force of armed men mustered, with some fifty or sixty others in red uniform. The officers who had entered the house were heartily welcomed by Laury, and after quaffing bumpers of spirit they drew their swords and quietly ascended



the stairs. To crash open the door of Grasper's room was the work of a second ; but as they sprang in, they found the window open and the prey gone. Laury cooled their rage by telling them Grasper could not well escape, and the unguarded vessel would easily be theirs. Eager to seize the noted craft, the officers descended to the lawn, and the redcoats, falling in, marched rapidly to the village, followed by the band of coastguardsmen. The force was about equal in numbers to Grasper's men ; but the regular soldiers added considerably to their power.

The march was only a mile, and they quickly passed the village huts ; but the lights now were all extinguished, and everything appeared steeped in slumber. They now divided ; the coastguardsmen proceeded to the beach, and in the dark launched some of the fishing-boats and pulled to the brigantine, while the soldiers marched to the cliffs, looking down upon the beach, off where the *Savicy Jane* was anchored.

Not a sound was heard, beyond a voice humming on board the smuggler craft, coming no doubt from the solitary watch. It was the mate, and he only was on deck, but heavily armed. Hearing the splash

of oars he checked his song, and looking over the side, shouted—"What boat is that?"

"Is your skipper on board, my man?" responded the officer in the first boat, as she glided alongside the brigantine.

"Yes, but he's asleep, and can't be disturbed," replied the mate. "What do you happen to want?"

"I'll tell you when I get on deck," answered the officer, and he seized hold of the main channels.

"Not so fast, my fine fellow," now said the mate; "visitors ain't allowed this time o' night."

This brief colloquy took no more time than sufficed for the boats to run alongside, and the officer to mount the vessel's side, others closely following; but as his body rose above the bulwarks, the report of the mate's pistol rang loud and clear, and the officer fell back, with a groan, amongst his men. The signal was enough, from fore and aft poured out the armed smugglers, and as the coastguardsmen clambered up the sides, they were met in the dark by the pikes and cutlasses of the tars. At once the officers leading the boarders saw the trap they had fallen into, and some of the boats dropping astern hauled upon the other

side ; but there the boarders met a like resistance. Not one could gain the deck, and though not a voice beyond the mate's was heard above the ringing of shots and clash of steel, those who for a moment gained a footing in the shrouds saw the brigantine swarming with men. Still the coastguardsmen returned again and again to the assault, but as fast as they clambered up they were hurled back or cut down.

Whilst this contest was onward, Captain Grasper in the tower had known from his scouts of the movement of the foe, and he listened to the sounds of fighting in the bay. The mate's first shot he had plainly heard, and after waiting some ten minutes, during which the smugglers on board kept back their foes with ease, Grasper arranged his men, and leaving a hand to run up the light to the flagstaff, he led his band rapidly, but quietly, from the tower. They soon perceived the forms of the soldiers on the cliff they were now themselves on. The smugglers divided into two parties, headed by Grasper and old Jakes. The latter party announced their approach by a sharp volley from their well-aimed pieces, and the soldiers, thus surprised, had scarce time to turn and discharge their pieces with uncertain aim, when

Grasper's band, under cover of the fire, made a terrific charge. Their pistol shots, fired within a few paces, confusing the soldiers, were followed by their sharp cutlasses. It was now hand to hand. Jakes' party poured in on their left flank, and the soldiers, unable to keep together, were separated and hotly engaged by the foe. Grasper, surrounded by some of his best men, was spreading death at every stroke of his blade. Retreat and form, the soldiers could not, for the smugglers pressed on with unabating fury.

At this critical juncture, the coastguardsmen still vainly assaulting the brigantine, heard the sounds of fighting on shore, and more puzzled at this changed aspect of affairs, rapidly pulled away from the *Saucy Jane*, and hastened to land. Grasper had heard the sounds cease in the bay, and guessing the cause, despatched a band back to the tower, and shouted with a voice of thunder—"Keep together, lads! keep together!" at the same time he pressed the slowly retreating soldiers more hotly. The shouts and tramping of the coastguard were now heard, and Grasper, surrounded by his men, placed them in a formidable body on the defensive. Jakes kept the soldiers, who now became assaulters, in play, and

Grasper faced the new foe, and cast eager looks to the tower.

On came the coastguardsmen, and a fine body of men they were, but they were met by the smugglers, who now fought at fearful odds. Grasper and his band were wholly surrounded, and the men with clenched teeth stood at bay. Grasper's voice cheering his men as he boldly set them example, was responded to by their hearty cheers, and telling blows. The light on the flagstaff was dipped once, and the smugglers seeing this, plied their blades with redoubled vigour, and many bit the dust, and blood flowed freely in the band itself.

Grasper's quick ear caught a sound above the din of clashing steel. "Ahoy! ahoy! Davis!" he shouted at the top of his powerful voice. "Ahoy! ahoy! captain!" answered a voice behind the coastguardsmen, and they in turn were assaulted by the fresh band of smugglers, headed by the mate, who rapidly made them give ground. Between two parties the coastguardsmen suffered frightfully, but old Jakes was needing help, for the soldiers were doing havoc with their bayonets.

The bands of smugglers met and joined, and now

made fierce onslaughts on their retreating enemies. Detaching a band, who now plied their muskets with telling effect, Grasper still headed his men, and loudly rang his well-known cry of—“*One and all ! One and all !*” His favourite war-shout.

Unable to keep ground, and with many fallen and falling, the soldiers broke and fled with precipitous speed, followed by the coastguardsmen who had suffered most in this disastrous affair.

The smugglers followed them beyond the limits of the village, and then returned and mustered at their captain's call. Lanterns were soon procured from the village ; the sight they revealed on the scene of conflict was truly terrible. Nearly one half of the enemy were either dead or badly wounded on the cliffs. The smugglers were many of them wounded more or less, but only a few dead. The advantage had been theirs.

The night's work was not yet over. Captain Grasper hastily ordered the dead and wounded to be conveyed to the village, and bidding Davis take his men on board again, he selected a party of the freshest and ablest hands, and hastening down to the beach, launched two of the smallest boats, and they

pulled rapidly in the bay. As they passed the village, an exclamation from one of the men, drew Grasper's attention.

"What is it, lad?" asked he.

"Look ahead, sir," answered the man. Grasper looked, and there beheld, circling up above the trees surrounding the "House," huge volumes of smoke, bright with the glare of fire.

"Pull! pull! lads, pull!" exclaimed he, as the meaning of this flashed across his mind, and the stout oars bent as the men made the boats bound through the water. Reaching the quay, Grasper sprang out followed by his men; the front of the house was deep in gloom, but in the rear rose the thick smoke, and a strong ruddy glare.

Up the lawn bounded Grasper, closely followed by his men muskets in hand; and hurrying to the back of the lordly pile, they saw the bright flames bursting from the windows, and lighting up the scene with a strange vividness.

Without uttering a word, the captain returned to the front, and trying the door, found it unlocked. In he rushed, and found the hall flooded with a strong light of the fire, and heard the flames crackling. He opened the nearest door. In the room,

the gay chandelier was still burning, but the room was stripped of its most valuable furniture. Across to the opposite room he hurried, still followed by his men, in mute astonishment at the strange scene. Here the same nakedness met his gaze, and Grasper at once knew the cause. Laury had, without a doubt, taken all the valuables and the best goods, and decamped. But why fire the house! Did he do it, or was it done accidentally in their hurried flight?

Grasper had no means of ascertaining this, and in truth he little cared. The suffocating atmosphere and intense heat made him leave the house, and he retreated down the lawn, and stood at a safe distance, with his men leaning on their guns in little groups, gazing silently at the burning house. The flames now shot forth from the front, and blazed high to heaven, throwing a fierce light on all around. Trees and lawn, and the strange figures of the smugglers stood out in strong relief.

The conflagration had been seen by the villagers, many of whom hastened to the spot. Grasper heeded them not. With a dark cloud on his brow, he stood with folded arms watching the crackling flames, and those around spoke only in low tones.



Still blazed the fierce fire, and the house was enveloped in one high sheet of flame. With a dull, thundering crash the heavy roof fell in, and dense showers of sparks and embers shot up to the sky, followed by rolling masses of dark clouds. The fire was spent, although it burst out here and there at times with a fitful vigour, but Grasper had seen the last. For a moment, his head bent upon his brawny hands, and then, starting erect, he threw his clenched fists upwards towards the now gloomy sky, and cried with a voice almost a wail, "Gone! gone!" He said no more, but turned and walked down the quay and entered his boat. The crew silently took their places and at a sign from their captain they gave way.

Again on board the brigantine, Grasper gave a few hurried orders to the mate, and hastened to his cabin, with a heavy heart and clouded brow. He felt the work of his life crumbling to ruin; and the loss of his house and its valuable contents, were to him a giant-blow never dreamt of—a shattering of his life hopes and life labours.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## WRECK OF THE BRIGANTINE.

THE day after the repulse of the coastguardsmen and soldiers dawned upon a lively scene in the bay. The sun had not yet risen, but a clear, grey light, rapidly increasing in brightness towards the east, lit up land and sea. The brigantine was still at anchor, but her sails all loosened, and her anchor almost up. On the cliffs, looking down upon the brigantine and upon the beach, on which several boats were hauled up, a great concourse of people meet our gaze. The crew of the *Saucy Jane* and the smugglers of the village mingled together around the powerful form of Grasper. He is leaning his left hand on the hilt of his cutlass, the point resting on the rock, and his right arm raised to call attention. He is close to the verge of the rocks, and in full view of the *Saucy Jane*. Near him stand the mate, Harding, Jakes, and a few others, a little apart from the surrounding mass, and several of the fisher wives press in, intent on

catching the captain's words. There is a sad but determined look on Grasper's countenance, as with a loud, clear voice, he addressed his followers :

"My brave men, all! I've piped all hands to muster, for I've a few things to yarn about. Last night you behaved as I knew you would, and as you've always done — true to the life — and though some of our lads got knocked about, and some slipped their cables, we were best off. But the red jackets will be back, I've no doubt, and in strong muster, too. We'd lick them again, if needs be; but, my lads, I'm thinking of you who live ashore, and I don't want to bring you into trouble. So far, nobody can say you shared in last night's row, and there you're safe; but those who have been scratched about, that tells tales. The old House is gone, and my wealth there gone too! That black-hearted knave who thought to sell us to the halter has done the mischief. And now, lads, all Captain Harry Grasper owns is the bonny craft there, and the brave lads who man her!"

"And we too, cap'n," broke in Jakes; and many voices echoed, "We too, Cap'n Harry."

"Ay, ay, lads, you too! But, lads, on board the *Saucy Jane* I've wealth enough to make us all rich.

Now, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. This coast is not safe for me, nor these waters neither. Before we weigh, I expect to see some sails in the offing. Some of you ashore can remain here safe enough. The huts are yours, and none to say no. But some of you must get away. From what I have you shall all have a share, and a good one too. Take your traps and your boats, and shift berths until the smoke's blown off. And now for you, my lads, who have trod *Jane's* deck these many years, all hands shall have a share, and be free to go or free to stop! Harry Grasper gives you a choice. Any man that likes may take his share and try his fortune, and I'll say good luck attend him."

A loud murmur of discontent arose from the crew at these words, but Grasper continued—"Hold on a bit, lads, and let me say out. I know every man of you is true, but my mind's made up. I shall leave this part and try other waters. My craft there is all my wealth now, and I must start afresh. I may never come back here again, but go to where we last came from. There are wide bits of sea to cross; queer weather to meet. Work must be done again; but in that part a man earns good wages, you well know, and no fear of coastguards. Now, my

lads, take your choice. Come with me again, and you'll find me as before ; leave me, and I'll not blame you."

Grasper paused, and the men, conversing together in low voices, came to a speedy resolve ; and Harding stepped in advance before the captain, cap in hand—

"Cap'n Harry, the lads wants me to say a few words for them. The best days we know have been with you. We all call the old craft our home, cap'n, and we've got no other. There's not a hand but what's had a scrape ashore, and can't see daylight, and you've always had a kind word for us. There's no man on earth, Cap'n Harry, we'd follow but you ; and there's no man can lead us like you !"

A loud cheer greeted Harding's spirited burst, and he continued—"To cut the yarn short, Cap'n Harry, we've sailed under ' One and all ' too long to cut it now. There's not a hand will go, cap'n ! Take the craft where you like, we'll go too, and that's settled. Now, lads,"—and he turned to the crew—"now, lads, three cheers for Cap'n Harry and the *Saucy Jane* ; bless her old timbers from stem to stern, and kelson to truck."

Heartily did the men respond to Harding's words, and loud cheers burst from lusty throats,

making the place ring again, and the caps were hurled aloft.

When the last cheer somewhat subsided, Grasper motioned for silence, and said, "My lads, I thank you all; and now no time must be lost. One thing, lads; had this affair not happened, my mind was made up to live a little more easy, perhaps run a few kegs now and then to keep our hands in; but now that plan is stove in, and we must try again. 'One and all' must wave a little longer, my brave lads, and the *Jane* weather a few more gales afore she's laid up in dry dock. Aboard with ye now, lads, and up with the anchor. We've no time to lose."

As Grasper finished, and his crew hastened down to the beach, old Jakes and Joe, with two or three others, advanced to him, saying—

"Cap'n Harry, will ye find us a berth? You know we've none of us wife or kids to look after, and the old fire's not gone out yet."

"That you proved last night, old friends," replied the captain, "and if you're agreed, why come aboard; not to work, though, unless for your own fun. You shall have snug berths for old acquaintance sake."

All matters were thus agreed, and Grasper had a

long interview with Norah, whose eyes streamed with tears. As they were parting she handed him a book, saying—"Here, Master Harry, take this from old Norah. The Lord knows, we may never meet on earth, but, Harry, there's something beyond to think about," and here her voice deepened in tone. "Ah, yes," she continued, "a something only this book can tell ye about ; but 'tis not many days since I began to read it myself. Ye'll take Norah's last gift, Master Harry, and read it for Norah's sake, won't ye?"

Grasper glanced at the book as he took it, and said—"I will, Norah, and it's not quite a stranger either, as you think ; but—but—well, never mind now ; I'll take the book, ay, and promise you to read it now and again."

With a few more words they parted, and Norah, from her little cot, watched the smuggler hasten down to his boat. On board the brigantine all was bustle. Grasper fulfilled his promise to the smugglers, and, amid many sad farewells, mixed with rough jests, the white sails of the *Saucy Jane* caught the fresh morning breeze, and she sailed from the bay. Some of the boats followed her for a great distance, and the point was crowded with eager gazers. One by one

the fishing-boats returned ; the flags on the vessel and the tower were dipped, and the *Saucy Jane* was fast disappearing from sight. No sail hove in sight ; no revenue cutter to dispute her way, for the morning sun was only peeping above the east when Captain Grasper and his bold crew left British waters to build up anew, by lawless deeds, the golden fabric which last night's affray had so demolished.

To follow the *Saucy Jane* in her voyage back to eastern seas would be tedious. We have already seen the crew on board, and the events, varied with calms and storms, are monotonously the same. Grasper, now entirely removed from, although not forgetful of, the influence of old Momien and his Christian friends, rapidly returned to his former state of mind. At times he was more thoughtful than heretofore, but his laugh and his song were heard as of old. Stronger nets of error were entangling his soul, and although he had a plan formed in his mind of seeking out Aungua and the others, and to become traders, yet he left not his old plans of accumulating wealth by any and every means. To use the *Saucy Jane* as a trader he knew, in the waters he now sought, would be as profitable as daringly seizing vessels and transferring their cargoes to her hold ; and, at the same



time, better opportunities would thus be opened of now and then "keeping his hand in," as he termed it.

As a sad proof of the smuggler's state of heart and mind, two vessels had fallen a prey to his desires. They were foreigners—a Frenchman and a Swede; but Grasper, with a growing dislike for bloodshed, left the crews and vessels untouched, after despoiling them of their choicest goods.

When, after a smart but stormy passage, they entered the China Seas again, more peaceful traders were captured, and everything bid fair to pour in rich streams of wealth into the coffers of the smugglers. Still Grasper held to his purpose of seeking Aungua. Knowing the direction they had taken, and where they were most likely to be located, he stood on his course to the north, and one day when they had entered the sea of Japan, and had passed without seeing the river where Grasper had last parted from Aungua, the *Saucy Jane* was lying like a sleeping swan on the bosom of the water. Her large sails hung flapping at times from the heavy yards, and stunsails were hoisted in vain. The heat was intense, and the sky without a cloud. The crew, lingering about the deck, were looking in all directions for any prospects of a wind. On the platform aft

stood Grasper, with his pipe in his mouth, and near him the mate. Grasper had his shirt collar opened, and his face shaded with a very broad-brimmed straw hat.

"Strand me, Davis, but we shall have to get the boats out and tow her, if this calm lasts much longer," said the captain.

"I think we shall, sir," answered the mate. "I don't like this hot air, Captain Harry; and see what a queer colour is getting over things."

"Why, Davis, the sky seems all ablaze, and the water looks queer, too," said the captain.

And in truth a strange colour was pervading everything. Clouds were rapidly forming, and sky, sea, and even the vessel, were all dyed in a blood-red tint, whilst the clouds assumed a deeper and more appalling colour. This rapidly passed, and on looking upward the sun appeared blue and sickly, and a like colour spread on all around. Every eye on deck watched these mysterious changes, and Grasper, putting away his pipe, said to the mate—

"I don't altogether like the looks of this, Davis. We've had a taster before of the weather in these parts. Hark, too! there's a wind! I can hear it coming up in the offing. We shall have a typhoon, or

I'm a Dutchman ! Take the stunsails in, and get the royal and topgallantsail off her, and stow the flying jib, Davis. No harm in being ready. And, Davis, rig in the flying jib-boom, send down the royal yard, and run up the main staysail."

"Ay, ay, sir," the mate responded, and springing to the edge of the platform, his loud voice roused the men to activity, and at once some sprang to the rigging. And now commenced the rattle of ropes through the blocks, the voices of the men in hauling, and the sails were taken in, royal yard sent down, and made all snug. Grasper still watched the horizon ; and the work being done, the men also narrowly looked around, ready for the next order. The mate returned to his commander's side.

Another change had taken place. The wind was heard moaning fitfully in the distance, and strong puffs filling the brigantine's sails moved her through the water. To the east a dark bank of clouds, murky and threatening, was rapidly spreading, and bearing down upon the vessel ; while from the bank, tufts of clouds, jagged and torn, were wafted over the sky, and a gloom rapidly covered the sea.

Grasper waited for no more. Springing to the edge of the poop, he roared out in a voice of thunder,

"All hands! tumble up now. Down with the jib some of you, and make it snug!" Away sped some of the hands as all now mustered on deck. Again the captain's voice shouted, "Come aft here, a few, and bind up the mainsail!"

Smartly did the men obey, and many hands made light work. The wind was now blowing in fierce gusts from the east, and squally. The sky was almost shrouded in gloom; but to the east it was like midnight, and the wind could be heard roaring. The waves tossed the foam about, as the brigantine dashed on her course to the north-by-east, and on the star-board tack. The crew had now seized the opportunity and donned their wet weather rigs, and the steward handed up Grasper's sou'wester and jacket, while Davis fetched up his own. Darker grew the sky around, and fiercer howled the wind. The brigantine, under fore-topmast staysail, mainstaysail, fore-topsail and foresail, bent before the wind until the sea entered her lee scupper holes.

"How is she heading, Harding?" asked Grasper of the helmsman.

Harding was invariably chosen for difficult steering, and as he held the jerking-wheel in his strong grasp, he replied — "She's pulling

off, sir, a point or more. She'll lay north, and in higher, sir."

"That won't do, Davis," remarked the captain; "won't do for long at any rate. If it holds on we must go about."

"That'll put us right in the teeth of it, captain," replied the mate, pointing as he spoke to the dense bank still spreading over the sky, and enough to quail the stoutest nerve.

"Better that than go ashore, Davis," answered Grasper; and he now turned to the crew, and seeing the brigantine labouring, he cried—"Lay aloft there, and reef the topsail! two reefs!"

Up clambered the ready crew, and crowding each yard arm, they gathered up the heavy folds of the canvas; and no easy task either, for the wind now howled, and the rain beat down, and the waves dashed over the labouring vessel, whilst the thunder rattled over the black sky, and the fierce lightning flashed with a blinding glare. Grasper watched the men.

"Strand me, Davis, but there's old Jakes. Look at him, as smart as any aloft! The weather earing, too!"

Davis looked, and there saw, plain enough, the



hardy old smuggler who had weathered many storms, his grey hair streaming in the breeze, his cap having blown overboard. Jakes was astride the end of the weather yardarm, and in that place of peril, but of honour, he was hauling out the sail. His loud voice, familiar to many on board, could be plainly heard shouting, "Light along there ! light along, my bullies."

After a long struggle with the storm, the sail was reefed, and the yard hoisted.

"How does she head now, Harding?" shouted Grasper, the wind almost drowning his voice.

"Nor'-west-by-nor', sir," cried the helmsman, now assisted by another stout hand.

Grasper muttered something. The wind was now hauling round to the north fast, and increasing in fury. He saw too much sail was set, and now came the order—

"Haul up the foresail ! man the clew-garnets, buntlines, and leechlines ! Haul up to windward ! Ease up the sheet handsomely now, Jakes ! Haul up and furl it."

Up rolled the huge sail, and was made fast to the yard, and the men again ready for the next command. The storm raged with terrific force, and the waves dashed repeatedly over the *Saucy Jane*, as

she strove to lay her course, for to leeward deadly rocks were fraught with peril.

"Another reef in the topsail!" roared Grasper; and up clambered the men to obey. A loud cry drew the captain's attention.

"What's the matter, Davis?"

"Two of the hands overboard, sir!" answered the mate; and as he spoke, a huge sea swept over the deck, and with a sound like the roar of thunder, the weather bulwark panels were dashed in; and the water rushed across sweeping everything in its course. The hands came down from aloft, and as they reached the deck, the jib, partly loosened from its gasket by the fierce wind, flapped terribly, making Grasper exclaim—

"That boom will go, Davis, if that canvas is not stowed. Lay out there, some of you, my lads, and make that thing fast! but have a care now!"

Three of the most active, Carlo being one, at once crept out on the bowsprit to the jib-boom; but ere they could handle the sail, the brigantine dipped; the boom sank beneath a mountain of water, and when it rose, the men were gone! washed away!

"It must be done, lads!" roared Grasper. "Lay

out there, some more ! Keep her off a little, Harding ! keep her off !”

The brigantine’s bows fell away from the wind, and three other seamen successfully made fast the sail.

“How’s her head now, Harding ?”

“Nor’-west, sir !” shouted the tar.

“She can’t stand this, Davis,” said Grasper. “She’ll go east-nor’-east on the other tack with this wind, and it seems hauling around to the west, too. We must go about, Davis ! Ready, about !” he roared, and the men took their stations.

For some moments none moved. The captain stood on the weather side of the poop, with one hand on the man-rope ; Grasper’s face wore a look of determination, and at every fierce lightning flash, which lit up the wild scene of tumult, he eagerly glanced ahead. The loud thunder rumbled over the vault of heaven with an appalling sound. But a few moments passed, during which the labouring brigantine had dashed on her way, bravely battling with the storm ; when Grasper’s voice was heard, in his quick, loud tone, “Haul down the main staysail and foretopmast staysail ! Shift the sheets over !”



The men obeyed, and the mate stationed himself at the topsail lee brace, waiting the order which soon came.

"Down with the helm, lads! Luff her handsomely, Harding! Luff her, lads!"

Every eye was fixed, and the helm being hard down, the brigantine veered to the wind. For a moment, the heavy topsail shivered with a loud noise.

"Let go and haul!" roared Grasper; and as the mate slacked up the lee-brace, and the men hauled in to starboard, the captain shouted, "Up with the foretopmast staysail and main staysail! Meet her, Harding, meet her with the helm!"

The *Saucy Jane* now stood on the port tack, but not without serious misgivings in Grasper's mind. He knew from experience much of the nature of typhoons; and, as far as he could judge, he had been caught in the north quadrant of the revolving storm as it travelled to the north-west. Had there been sea-room, a run to the westward would have taken him beyond danger; but the shore was close at hand, and putting the vessel about absolutely necessary. Her course now lay right across the centre of the storm, as it advanced in its destructive career. Grasper

knew this, but there was no alternative. At his order the boats were secured more firmly, and the lugger cleared for service, if necessary. The well was sounded, and on hearing the depth of water, Grasper ordered the pumps to be manned.

The brigantine stood on ; the storm increased in force ; and the waves, lashed by the hurricane, literally steamed with foam. The crew stood at their posts, each man holding on, as the huge waves dashed over them through the broken panels. The thunder rumbled and pealed, and the lightning flashes increased in violence. Ahead, and on the lee bow, a dense gloom made the men look at each other anxiously, as they saw their vessel plunging towards it like a maddened courser. Five of their number had now been swept away by the greedy waves, and as the sea, increasing in fury, continuously broke over the vessel, carrying away more of the bulwarks, they knew not whose turn would be next. The guns were still safe, but every loose spar had gone ; the lugger stood abaft the galley cleared for service.

On stood the brigantine, but Grasper saw she could not long brave the fury of the tempest lying close to the wind ; still he had no alternative. Whilst deliberating in his own mind what plan to pursue, a

blinding gleam of lightning flashed overhead, followed by a sharp crash, and the foretop-gallant-mast fell, parted at the topmast cap. As the loud peal of thunder burst over the vessel, and before the captain could give an order, another crash heralded the fall of the maintop-mast.

"Lay aloft and clear away the lumber," shouted Grasper, as his brow became more clouded at these increasing troubles.

Again the men returned to the deck, over which the waves were now breaking more violently, and the starboard quarter-boat hurled from its lashings, strong though they were, was left in fragments astern.

The *Saucy Jane* had now stood for half an hour on this tack, and going at a terrific speed, but Grasper saw it next to impossible to hold on. The wind was now one continuous deafening roar, the artillery of heaven bursting over the vessel with a sound as if heaven and earth were mingling in fierce battle, while the lightning played about the ironwork of the vessel, lighting up the wild scene with an unearthly blaze.

Grasper now saw the wind hauling with great rapidity to the south, but with still increasing fury.

He determined to scud before the wind, and for that purpose the topsail was closer reefed, and the fore and aft sails hauled down, and away on her race for life sped the *Saucy Jane*, keeping ahead of the heavy waves, but which at times, overtaking her, would break over the bulwarks. It was a terrific scene. Now in the hollow of a gigantic wave, which, rising astern, seemed sweeping down to engulf them in its yawning depths, when, lo! it would fall, and passing under the vessel, lift her on its crest, high above the wild scene. Then the watery mountains again would rise ahead, and the labouring vessel, as if endued with life, and encouraged by Grasper's exclamations, "Well done, good lass! we'll ride it yet," she would pause for a second, and lifting her bows to leap the huge barrier, would make a plunge, fall short of the mark, and with a quiver from stem to stern, plunge into the midst of the wave, which swept clean over her decks.

On she sped, however, each sea carrying away some portion of the bulwarks, around which life-lines were fastened; the wind still hauled around, and now blew from the south-east. The men at the helm had been relieved by two others, but not a man had left the deck. For an hour and more the *Saucy Jane* fled before the

hurricane, which pursued the flying vessel like a demon raging for its prey. Grasper still maintained his post, endeavouring to pierce the deep gloom ahead. A lightning flash athwart the sky now lit up the scene, and revealed a danger which made him shout with a suddenness and loudness that startled every man—"Port traces! port traces! haul up! let fly to starboard! port the helm! hard a-port! bear a hand! bear a hand! Haul out the foot of the mainsail!" and as he yelled forth these sudden orders, he flew himself to the mainsail, cast off the brails, and seized the out-haul. The helmsmen obeyed, and the men flew to the ropes; but before the yard could swing or the brigantine come round to the wind, a heavy sea striking her quarter broke over the bulwarks, and with a force no human power could resist, washed the two seamen away from the wheel.

"Hold on, hold on, for life!" roared Grasper as he saw the men swept off, and dashing to the wheel with a giant force he put it hard a-port, but too late. A loud cry rose from the men as the lightning revealed the danger, and the brigantine struck heavily on a rock. Again and again she struck, and the terrific shock made the foremast go by the board. Sea after sea now swept over the wreck, and many of the crew,

who had lost their hold when she struck, were washed away into the boiling waves.

Leaving the helm, Grasper mounted the poop, and for a moment surveying the scene, with tightly closed teeth and a flashing eye, he saw the remaining quarter-boat stove in, and then loudly shouted, "Lay aft here, my lads." The men came as best they could, and gathered around the house on which stood Grasper.

"Where's the mate, lads?" asked he.

The men looked around, and then one replied—"Washed overboard, sir!"

"My lads," Grasper now continued, "my lads, the old craft is a wreck, but this is no time for words. The land is near I can see, and to leeward. These seas we cannot stand, and the craft must go to pieces afore long. The lugger is left, and she's weathered many heavy seas, and it's your only chance. Keep steady, lads; follow my orders, and Harry Grasper will do his best. Over with her, Harding; but have a care. There's deep water to leeward."

Without a word the men obeyed, and as Grasper saw them going to the lugger, headed by Harding, he could not count fifty in all, the others he knew the greedy waves had claimed as their prey. Soon the

lugger was over, the intervals being seized between the heavy seas which swept over the rock and the brigantine. The men waited, and not a man left the deck beyond those to steady the boat. Grasper knew what they wanted. "No, no, lads!" he called out, still from his old position—"no, no, lads! Harry Grasper will be the last to go. Over with you. I say it, lads, over with you. You go, Harding; the land is close to leeward."

The men hesitated, and a murmur rose to their lips, and Harding mounting the poop said—"I'll not go, Captain Harry, unless you go too. There's room for all!"

"Until I'm washed off I'll not leave the old craft; so, Harding, go! Save your life, lad; but never will Harry Grasper leave the *'Saucy Jane'* while he's strength to stand by her, and she an inch of plank to stand on. Go, I say. What, lads, will ye disobey my last order? If ye love me, lads, go!"

One by one the seamen passed over the side, and took their places in the lugger, which was tossing on the angry waves. The little doctor, pale with terror, came to the captain, and with tears starting in his eyes, shook hands. Neither spoke, and he followed the men. One only remained on the deck beside

Grasper and Harding, who would not go. The man who remained made no movement, but looked over at the boat.

“Look alive, Gupta!” shouted they in the boat.

“Come, lad, over with you!” cried Grasper.

Gupta shook his head, but moved not. The crowded lugger pushed off, and Grasper, turning to Harding at his side, said, “Where’s old Jakes? I didn’t notice him.”

“Here he is, Cap’n Harry,” uttered a voice, and Grasper beheld the old smuggler, who had screened himself behind the swivel gun. “Don’t say nothing, cap’n,” he continued, as he saw Grasper about to speak. “I can’t leave ye.”

Grasper replied not; his heart was full. The faithful attachment of these three, and the loss of his loved vessel, was like a mountain on his heart—and a tear glistened in the smuggler’s eye.

The heavy seas swept over them as they held on, and the storm raged with all its fury. The lugger was lost in gloom, when a loud cry from that direction arrested the attention of the four on the wreck.

“She’s gone down! poor lads!” muttered Jakes; but before any could speak, a loud clap of thunder



was followed by a sea which broke over them. When it passed, Grasper threw off his heavy jacket and sou'wester, and the others, guessing his intention, did the same. Springing to the deck, and followed by the others, he drew his knife, and cut the lashings of the hencoops. Before he could explain his plans, a huge wave, closely followed by another, washed over the vessel, and the four were battling with the raging waters.

Grasper looked around; for a moment he saw three heads above the waves; with a loud cry, one sank, and the remaining two men, who had fortunately seized the hencoops, were swept from his sight. He was alone! Drawing a deep breath, Grasper put forth his giant strength, and struck out boldly for the shore. Rising and falling over the tossing water, heedless of the howling hurricane or the rattling thunder, he swam on. It was a struggle indeed. With no spar to cling to, nought but his herculean strength and bold heart, he battled with the waves. The lightning revealed to him the land he was striving to gain, and the wind, travelling in the same direction, helped the swimmer on. This was not the first time Grasper had breasted the stormy waves, but now the long watching during the storm had some-

what impaired his strength, and many times the heavy waves rolled over his head. Still he struggled on, and soon saw the rocks looming close at hand. Summoning all his fast failing strength for a desperate effort, he struck out with greater force. A few paces more and all will be safe ! A faint cry almost at his side made him turn in the water, and Grasper beheld Harding, faint and helpless, slipping from the hencoop to which he had no more strength to cling. "Keep up your heart, lad !" muttered the smuggler, as he saw the danger of the exhausted sailor, and immediately went to his help. Seizing him with one hand he again turned with his burden, and struck out for the rocks. He felt ground ! but his own strength was going fast, and the huge billows breaking on the beach with overwhelming violence. Lifting Harding with a giant effort on to his shoulders, Grasper staggered up the bank, hurled back by each recoil of the boiling waves ; and again struggling to get beyond their sway, he made a last trial, and then, unable to do more, fell with his burden, exhausted, on the sands, heedless of the wild storm which still rode the waters in all its fury and rage !

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE HUNTER'S FRIEND.

THE trees wore the rich tints of autumn, and the sun poured its bright rays down on a strange scene. Putting aside the dense foliage which borders a slight eminence, we gaze upon a mountain-dell at our feet. A deep forest is at our back, and this grassy eminence, projecting a few paces from it, is so bordered by the low trees and thick shrubs, that nothing save the high mountain tops can be seen over them. Putting aside the thick branches, we see that this eminence descends into the steep slope some twelve feet in height, and that its base is washed by a small gurgling stream. Extending in front is a narrow, high-banked dell or valley, the two banks being in fact the continuation of the one we stand on. That to our right slopes to the plain, and is crowned with thick trees, and at one part severed, the gap reaching nearly to the dell, and crowded with dark foliage. A narrow gorge separates the eminence on which we stand from the

bank, and through this opening, dark with shade, rushes the tiny stream. The left bank is more precipitous, and its base, sides, and top are completely shrouded with shrubs. At its junction with the eminence from whence we gaze, an isolated rock of great size stands in the dell, under the shade of a tall, thick-branched tree. Its outer side is skirted with shrubs, and the narrow stream, with an abrupt bend, washes past the rock, rolling down the gentle slope of the dell, until it is lost where the two banks almost join. Lofty hills, behind deep forests, into which the stream wanders, enclose this sweet and mountain nook.

There are other objects to attract our notice. In the dell, close to the rock, and with its body buried in the high grass, lies a dead deer, small and of the red species, with its head and antlers hanging in the stream. Crouching behind the rock we have noticed, and eagerly peering over its top, is a hunter, rifle in hand. We cannot mistake him. It is Aungua, and dressed as when we last saw him. The deer in the dell explains the cause of his presence in this lonely scene. Following his glance across the dell, we see the reason of his entrenching himself behind the shaded rock. Sheltered by the thick trees crowning the bank, several dark-skinned men armed with muskets

are deliberating. At once we divine the meaning of this scene. The deer is Aungua's spoil, but he has been disturbed and menaced by marauders. He has been in this position only a few minutes, and counted no less than six men, all well armed and sheltered by the trees; whether they have more behind he cannot tell.

Aungua looked around him from his well sheltered rock, but listened in vain for any well-known sounds. On his right rose the thickly-wooded eminence, from whence we viewed the scene, but no sign could he perceive to betoken help at hand. His rifle he held ready cocked, and he loosened a light hatchet and long hunting-knife in his belt.

At first Aungua was puzzled at this, and could think of no reason beyond wishing to gain the deer, which should induce the men thus to menace him; but one, apparently the leader, stepping into view, he recognised the man, and now knew they sought, not the deer, but his life, which he was determined stoutly to defend. Escape he could not. To leave his rock, whether to climb the bank and make for the forest, or to dash down the dell, would put him under their fire at once.

Aungua was loth to commence hostilities, and he

therefore waited their attack. He waited long, for the marauders knew his rifle would lay one in death, and neither cared to be that one.

Some course of action at last seemed to be decided upon, and Aungua saw a movement among the trees. Getting his rifle in a good position over the bush tops, an idea suddenly struck him. He placed two loose fragments of rock close together ; and between these he pointed his rifle, keeping his eye fixed on the enemy. It was fortunate that he did so, for a loud yell was followed by a report, and the bullet whistled over his head. In quick succession rang out the reports of the remaining guns, and the first who fired, thinking to gain the rock under cover of the other rifle shots, before Aungua could venture to take aim, made a bold dash. Had Aungua not placed the broken rocks as a screen, this plan no doubt would have succeeded ; but the balls struck harmlessly against them, and before the man gained the centre of the glade, a bullet from Aungua's rifle stretched him dead.

With a loud shout his companions, seeing Aungua unable to reload in time, sprang from their covert, but instantly two sharp reports rang through the glade, and the two leading men fell to the ground.

The white smoke came from the woody eminence, and the remaining marauders, with a sudden panic, turned and dashed into the gap, and disappeared. Surprised, but thankful for this timely help, Aungua hastily loaded his rifle, and stepping into the dell, looked up to the eminence from whence came the friendly shots, expecting to see his brother hunters; but he saw none. A loud laugh greeted him, and the branches parting, a face peered down, and a voice shouted, "Hillo, lad, just in time, I guess!—eh, Aungua?"

Amazement rooted Aungua to the spot, as he shouted, "What, captain!"

"You're right, Aungua, and no mistake!" replied his deliverer; and Grasper ran down the bank, leapt the stream, and seized Aungua by the hand. Two other forms appeared, and soon Harding and Gupta stood in the dell. The three had rude knapsacks at their backs, and carried guns, besides cutlasses and pistols in their belts. Grasper wore his large boots, but was dressed in monkey jacket, over a striped Guernsey, and a tarpaulin hat covered his head. Harding was similarly attired, minus the boots; but Gupta wore a red skull cap and dark Guernsey.

Aungua took in these particulars at a glance, and

having dropped his rifle, whilst holding Grasper by both hands, exclaimed, "Oh, captain, I cannot express my joy at seeing you ; but tell me, how comes it you are here ? Where are your men ? and your vessel, captain, where is that ?"

A deep shade passed over Grasper's face as he replied, "I've a long yarn to spin, Aungua, but let's get out of this place first. How far are we from your quarters ? How fares Domea, and the old man, too ?"

Aungua replied in a few words. On hearing of Momien's death, Grasper exclaimed, "Good old man, and so he's gone, too ! Ah, well, I didn't expect it, but I ought to have. One thing never comes upon a man but others follow in its wake, like waves on the beach. But, Aungua, let's start, for we've had a long trip to-day. And as we go tell me the meaning of this encounter !"

Aungua stooped to raise the deer to his shoulders, but Grasper prevented him, and put it on his own, in spite of remonstrance. The four now, with guns in hand, and keeping a sharp look-out, walked down the dell, and Aungua explained the event which had just occurred.

"Only a few weeks back," said he, "an attack



was made on our little village by those very marauders in company with others, and I suppose the repulse they met with has made them thirst for revenge, and hence their assault on me. The leader I at once recognised. These parts are very dangerous, and we seldom hunt here alone ; but to-day we became separated, and in hurrying up this glade to capture the deer which I had followed, a rifle-ball whistled close to my head, and I sprang behind the rock where you found me, and thank God for your timely arrival, captain."

"Thank God, indeed, Aungua," responded Grasper, with great fervour. "But let us hasten, for I have much to tell you."

They hastened on, and in little more than an hour reached the solitary tree, opposite to Aungua's home, where his canoe was moored. They were soon paddling across the broad river and speeding up the bank. Domea as usual came to the door to meet Aungua, but words cannot describe her joyful surprise when she recognised the captain, and he expressed as great delight in seeing her again. The maid, Loo, hurried out and screamed with joy as the brawny sailor, Harding, caught her in his arms, to the no

little surprise of all, who had no idea matters had so far advanced.

Great excitement characterized the next two hours, and Grasper in the dining-hall, and his two followers in the kitchen, did justice to a bountiful meal. Whilst this was onward, Aungua related to Grasper all that had transpired since their parting, but as yet the captain had not uttered a sound of his own proceedings. Aungua brought down his relation to the time of their meeting, and as he ended, Grasper exclaimed, "Good old Momien, and so he remembered me, and prayed for me? Ah, Aungua, he spoke the truth when he told you to say idolatry lurks in the heart; and truth, too, that there are more Shoodagons in western lands than in all Burmah. Ah, Aungua, Momien was right; but let's have a yarn now." Grasper had uttered Momien's words half musingly, and then the two friends with Domea entered the room in which Momien died. Here a cheerful fire of wood blazed in the large chimney, and the room altogether wore a look of comfort. Grasper's own chair was placed before the fire, and seating himself in it, with Aungua and Domea on his left he thus commenced his yarn:—

"In the starting, Aungua, I must tell you how I

came to be in Burmah at all. It's too long a yarn to spin all through, and one I care not to dwell upon. I was an outlaw, and that's the clearing up of the matter. What for, can now matter little, but I left my own land and found my way to Burmah, as you know." Grasper continued to tell all he dared to tell of his wanderings since his parting with the Christians. As the evening deepened and the fire threw its ruddy glare around, Aungua and Domea still listened with intense eagerness while the captain detailed his arrival and reception at home; the villany of Laury, and the fray with the coastguard and soldiers. When he came to the destruction of his house, he said, "The squall was rising, Aungua—the squall was rising."

Grasper paused for some seconds, apparently lost in thought, and then in a sadder tone continued his story. The subject of the last voyage of the *Saucy Jane* was painful to him, but he lingered over it. All that we already know he related, and paused as he spoke of falling with the man, Harding, exhausted upon the beach. "How long I lay there, Aungua, I cannot guess," continued the smuggler; "neither do I think I was altogether senseless, but when I roused up and looked around, the sea was like a mill-pool again. The storm had died

away as fast as it came, and scarcely any wind played over the sea, but the waves were still rather high. I was on a high sandy beach with the cliffs overhanging as if ready to tumble down. Near me was Harding. I thought at first he had slipped his cable; but he got round. A little lower down the beach was Gupta, my old cook, lashed to a hencoop. He was getting round, too. Several of my poor lads were on the beach stiff and cold, and the place was strewn with spars and bits of wreck, and among them I spied bits of the lugger. I suppose all on board her went down. What was worse to me, lad, was the old craft. Not more than a quarter of a mile from shore was a low rock, out of sight at high water. On it was the old lass jammed taut enough. Her bows were gone, but her stern rose clear out of water, and the stump of the mainmast was standing. What I felt, lad, I can't tell ye. As soon as Harding and Gupta came round, I swam off to the old craft, and got aboard. Ah, Aungua, I've passed through many scenes, and enough to cow the stoutest heart; but never did I feel as I did when standing on poor *Jane's* deck, and saw what havoc was done. The long raker stood fast, but the other guns were gone, and at parts, the deck-planks forced up.

Well, I went in the cuddy; things looked more at rights there, and barrin' a few had fetched away, everything else looked snug and taut. I fetched out my chart, and sat down at the old table, and conned over it to see my whereabouts, and how to steer. Then I took my pick out of the rifles and other things, and what else we might want for a trip ashore, and then knocked up a small raft. The boats were all gone. I soon got things in readiness, but just as I thought of leaving, I went back once more to my berth, and there, taking a last look like, I spied the book old Norah gave me. Why I did it then, I couldn't tell, but I put it in my chest. Well, I hadn't the heart to leave the old craft for others to pick about, but stay by her I couldn't, either. The lads were gone, and she a wreck. If you can guess what the feeling is like, Aungua, to put a bullet through your lassie there, then you may fancy what I felt to burn the old craft. Well, I did it; and as I reached the shore with my little raft and cargo, I saw the flames rising from the old hull, and the black smoke rolling up to the sky. It was almost night then, and I leaned against a rock, and watched the *Saucy Jane* burning.

"I don't know, but I think if all the coast-guard that ever mustered came on me then, I

couldn't have stirred. The old craft I had lived in from childhood, and called my home! she I loved as a man loves his very life! we had weathered many gales together, and never had she proved false! but there she was, Aungua, burning to a cinder; and the lads, too, who loved me so well, and stuck to Harry Grasper through thick and thin for many years, who'd go where I liked to lead them—all gone! all gone!"

The strong man bowed his head on his brawny hands, and large tear-drops, unseen by others, slowly coursed down the smuggler's young but weather-beaten face. Domea could not keep from weeping; but suddenly Grasper roused, drew his hand across his face, and in a sterner voice, said—

"After that night, lad, little occurred of consequence. I will give you more particulars another time, but I must tell you one thing, and it will warm your heart, I know. We had long marches, but I had a small chart and compass in my knapsack. We were not molested, and the people we fell across were kind. Still I kept as clear of the villages as possible, and steered right across the country. We kept watch by night, and in my spell I would rake up the fire and read a bit of Norah's book. I took a liking to it, Aungua. Well, to cut matters short, I saw the truth of it, and thank God I did. The

squalls that had come upon me were for good, I know. If the old craft had weathered the gale, Harry Grasper would have been as before, but a wiser head chalked out my course, and sent her on the rock. I was stripped of all, that I might find that harbour prepared only for poor, helpless, destitute sinners like myself."

Grasper ceased, and Aungua, seizing his hands gave them a warm grasp. He could scarcely express his joy at the captain's changed manner and sentiments, but getting more calm, he said—"Captain, we are happy now, indeed. You are back to us, and now, I trust, to remain. All we have we owe, first to God, and then to you ; it is yours, and you must live here, and be captain again."

"No, no, Aungua," answered Grasper, and a shade crossed his brow. "What you've got is yours. I mean to stop, but my arms shall get what little I may want. Now say no more, Aungua, unless you want to see me off again. It's getting late now, and the moon is out, so I intend having a little stroll outside to think over matters ; and to-morrow, if all's well, we must have a few more yarns, and see how things look up."

After more remarks, Grasper rose, and going to

the door, looked out. The moon was up, and lighting the scene with her silver radiance. The hunters were all in their dwellings and asleep, when Aungua and the captain, with their rifles in hand, stepped out into the plain, and slowly walked across to the grove, talking as they went.

"Yes, lad, I've found the truth of that," said Grasper, in answer to some remark of Aungua's, "I've found the truth of that. I remember now when that pongee, Koonah, came aboard to settle about trapping you, I thought what a pity it was, or rather I felt proud that I was so much ahead of him, when he talked of his idol; but now, thank God! the scales are gone, and I have learnt a truth, and I have seen it worked out more at home, I fancy, than in these parts."

"In which way, captain?" asked Aungua.

"Which way? Well, at the time, of course, I thought nothing of it; but when I look back and con the thing a bit, it's all as plain as a capstan bar; and any man who sees the heart has to do with it, will see the same truth. I tell you what, Aungua, it's a man's chief passion or whatever you call it, makes him the idolater. Now mine was money—my motto was, 'One and all,' and everything went before money, not altogether



for the stuff itself, but for the sway it would give me."

They had reached Momien's grave. In the calm, bright light of the moon Grasper leant upon his gun, as he stood at the foot of the grass-covered mound. The fine old tree shaded the silent spot, and the simple name on its trunk could be clearly read. Both Grasper and Aungua were deep in thought for many minutes, as they gazed upon the sweet resting-place of the wearied pilgrim. He, they trusted, had gone up higher, but the body was there. Sacred only as the Christian's grave, hallowed only as the landmark of memory, the brown earth bore its grassy carpet undistinguished from the surrounding plain, save by the mound.

Grasper was deep in meditation as he looked down on the quiet mound. Aungua did not disturb him. After a long lapse of unbroken stillness the smuggler spoke, as if unconscious that any one was near—"Ah, old man, perhaps little did you dream that Harry Grasper would one day stand at your grave, and lift up a prayer to the great God who made us all. Under your dark skin, old man, beat a heart of love and truth. I would I could see you but once more; to you alone could I ease my heart of this mountain;

but God's will is otherwise, and that will is best. Harry Grasper may not be long ; my voyage may soon end, and my cable slipped, but there's work to be done. ' One and all ' has been my word, and ' One and all ' shall ever be, but for God and not for self. And now," said Grasper, " let's home, Aungua. The lassie will be fidgety about you. Go you ahead. I'll be with you in a few minutes."

Aungua left him, and when Grasper saw him beyond earshot, he cast down his gun, and fell on his knees on the grave. He remained there long, and, rising, he seized his gun again, and spoke aloud—" No, no ; I dare not tell them. To Him alone need I tell that and He has swabbed out all the stains ; but, ah ! if I could but go back, and knowing as I do now, the knife should have gone in Harry Grasper's heart rather than cut down the poor old man. I feel the load still—but tell them ? No, no, Harry ; that must be kept locked up in your own heart. Perhaps one day, when I'm called to dry dock, I may, I may—but not now."

Grasper gave one more look at the grave, glanced aloft to the bright moon, and around the sky to see what weather promised, and, then, shouldering his rifle, trod hastily over the plain towards the dwelling which Aungua had entered.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE SMUGGLER'S GRAVE.

A LONG period of nearly thirty years has passed away since the scene related in the preceding chapter. We view the hunters' village again. A great change has come over the place. The hills are the same ; the same river rolls onward ; the trees bloom as they did thirty years ago, but nearer the village the grove has been much thinned. And see how wide the village has spread. It is still a village, but has increased in size, while the neat houses, well built, are gathered in picturesque clusters. From the centre, a small spire, pointing skywards, shows where the villagers are wont to assemble for worship. Aungua's house is the same, apparently, but nearer the river's edge than the others. Wider tracts of land are enclosed and cultivated, and we descry numerous herds of cattle and horses browsing in the distance. On the river-side there is also a change. A neat wharf or quay, projecting from a good-sized house, is

clustered around, with many boats, of many sizes—from the frail canoe, sufficient to carry one or two, up to a fine little craft, anchored further out the stream. This is but a miniature, but a sweeter little vessel the eye could not rest on. Her jet-black, swan-like hull, and two tall masts, carrying heavy fore and aft sails, showing out clearly as the sun declines behind the western hills. On the quay rises a lofty flagstaff.

The village is alive with activity ; forms are moving about, and on the quay, and in some of the boats, are many persons variously engaged. A little group of three before the wooden house attracts our attention. One is seated on a rough bench ; he is a man of full sixty years of age, hair and large whiskers grey, but with a manly face furrowed by time. His giant body, with strength but little impaired by time, strikes us as familiar ; and a frank, open, fearless look about the old man's face makes us wonder where or when we have before seen it. His dress is simple and hunter-like, with the exception of huge boots casing his legs. Before him stand two men. One is also advanced in years, but still not more than fifty-two or thereabouts, with a weather-beaten countenance. The third person is a native of somewhat small stature, compared with the two Europeans ; for such they are.

In truth, he has the unmistakeable Burman cast of countenance, is well made, and about twenty years of age. With his head uncovered, and his black hair reaching to his shoulders, he leans on a long rifle."

"What sort of craft was he, lad?" asks the old man, who is seated.

"He appeared old, captain," said the Burman; "perhaps your own age, but he looks older. Still he is a strong-made man."

"Where does he hail from?" continued the captain, who is indeed Harry Grasper himself.

"That I could not learn, captain," answered the young hunter: "he was too reserved, but Harding thinks he can guess."

"Well, Cap'n Harry," broke in the other (who is Harding), "it strikes me he is either a Burman, or hails from near there."

Grasper mused for a few moments, and then turning to the youngest man, said—"Hunt up your father, lad. He's not far off. Tell him to bear down to the quay, for I want to have a little yarn."

"Ay, ay, captain," replied the hunter, and he at once sped off to the village.

"Get aboard, lad," continued Grasper to Harding; "loose the canvas, and up with the *Jane's* anchor."

Harding hastened away, and by the time the large sails of the little vessel we have noticed were loosened, Grasper had walked up and down the quay, until he saw the young hunter return in company with a man, also a Burman, of about fifty years old. To him Grasper approached, saying—"I want to see you a few minutes, Aungua. I'm off on a little trip." The two old friends talked together for some time, and then parting, Aungua watched Grasper go on board the little vessel, accompanied by the young hunter, who was indeed Aungua's son. In a few moments the wide sails expanded before a fresh breeze, and the vessel moved swiftly up the river towards the western hills.

We will say a few words now respecting what passed during the thirty years we have spoken of.

All had gone as smoothly as can be expected in our troubled world and chequered life. Aungua and Domea lived on, respected and loved by all; their influence and wealth extending rapidly, until their little cots expanded into the large village we now see. In their own dwelling a family had sprung up, two girls and a boy. The boy was given over wholly to Grasper's tuition, and great, indeed, was the love which the old smuggler had for the lad. Himself a daring hunter,

he still kept the management of the boats, and under his charge, with Harding's help, a great change in them was soon effected. To build a craft, in form a miniature of the *Saucy Jane*, was Grasper's delight. This he did, and every part of the sweet little vessel, in which he is now speeding up the river, bore evidence of a thorough seaman's skill. Young Harry Aungua, as Aungua's son was named, was almost constantly with Grasper, and became a thorough sailor himself. When but a child it was delightful to see him borne about by the strong man; and as he grew in years Grasper would enjoy to make him a bold swimmer, at times carrying him on his shoulders out into the very centre of the river, and suddenly letting him sink to the bottom, would dive and pick him up again. Domea was often timid for her boy, but she could trust the captain, and it warmed her faithful heart to see the giant so loving her son. At times, too, Grasper would take young Harry, when he could handle a rifle, away to the forests, perhaps for days, and in this manner he trained the lad to hardy, healthful work.

Domea was as busy as a bee. Clustering around her home, so bright and dear to her, were several neat dwellings. Her two daughters, both married

now, lived there ; and for some years Harding and Loo also, who long ago were "spliced." Little fairy forms flitted here and there, and childhood's voices rang out their merry laughs.

Grasper was located in Aungua's dwelling. He protested, but they insisted, and he was thoroughly installed there, whilst Gupta for many years officiated as cook.

The hunters had now become a numerous band, and many had become Christians. Every Sabbath day the humble little house of prayer was well attended, and either Aungua or Grasper conducted a simple yet beautiful service.

But clouds came at times, as clouds will come, to obscure the brightest sky. Around old Momien's grave, now headed by a neat stone, Grasper's own work, several grassy mounds can be counted. Beneath the green grass, emblem of man's little life, lay Harding's wife, Loo ; beneath another was poor Gupta, sleeping his last sleep ; and under a third mound slumbered a raven-haired boy, Aungua's second son, who had died in early youth. Other graves were there, wherein hunters, or their loved ones, were calmly sleeping in death.

Nor were these all the clouds. Troubles in many



shapes oftentimes cast shadows over the hearts and homes of our friends, but still they lived happy. Changed in features, Aungua and Domea were unchanged in love, except that the flame burned brighter. Tell me not of love, a holy love, blazing in the hearts of youth, and chilled and damped by time and age ! It may be so in some hearts, but never where once truly kindled. Loving in youth, Aungua and Domea loved in age.

But whilst we thus linger, Captain Harry Grasper has disappeared round the bending of the river ; and following him, we find the light boat—for she could scarcely be called more—had advanced far on her way. For miles they continued sailing, until a small village came in sight, and here Grasper and young Harry sprang on shore. They were seldom seen apart. Some of the villagers were out, and warmly welcomed the comers, who were no strangers to them.

“ Where’s the stranger who arrived to-day ?” asked Grasper, of the foremost villager.

“ Gone again.”

“ Gone ! Where, and how long ?” asked the captain.

“ Not more than ten minutes,” was the answer ; and after a few more queries and replies, Grasper

shouldered his rifle, and still followed by his protégé, turned up a beaten path leading to the rear of the village. They had walked for nearly a quarter of an hour, and were just emerging from a dense wood, when young Harry caught Grasper's attention, and both coming to a sudden halt, looked silently before them.

A narrow stream rushed by the wood, and within a few yards of the gazers, they saw an aged man seated musingly on a broken rock washed by the stream. In his hand he carelessly held a long rifle by the barrel, and in his belt hung a light hatchet and hunting-knife. Grasper gazed at him attentively, as his companion whispered a few words in his ear.

The man heard them not. There was nothing unusual in his hunter's dress, beyond his cap. That was strangely made of a skin, and the peak projecting over his face, shaded it very much, whilst the back hung over his brawny shoulders like a curtain. From his elbows the stranger's arms were naked, and as he sat with one hand supporting his head, the rays of the evening sun shone full in his brown face—which was thin, and wore a deep air of gloom and sadness.

A movement of Grasper startled the silent watcher,

and hastily catching up his rifle, he turned, and saw two men advancing from the wood. "We are friends, good stranger," said the captain, in the Burman tongue, and the stranger, with an air of surprise, lowered his rifle, and answered somewhat sternly, "What want you with me?"

Grasper smiled as he extended his brawny hand, saying—"To shake your fist, brave 'Tiger of Yumadong.'"

The stranger started, and a deep shade passed over his face. Fixing a keen glance on the speaker, he said, "Your face, stranger, have I not seen before? Where? When?"

"Strand me, now, but that's good!" cried Grasper, with a laugh; and, dropping his rifle, he placed both hands on the stranger's shoulders, and standing at arm's length, he said—

"Look at my figure-head, Behring, and say if you've forgotten Harry Grasper of the *Saucy Jane*!"

Before he had finished, a gleam of light flashed over Behring's face, and seizing Grasper's hand, he wrung it warmly, exclaiming—"Captain! captain! is it indeed you? I was for a moment puzzled. So many scenes and faces in the last thirty years made me for a moment forget. And Aungua, where is he?"

"Not far off," answered Grasper; "and this lad is his son. Now, Behring," said Grasper, "let's weigh for home. You'll make their hearts happy, and I'm all afire to have a yarn. You must give me some on the trip home, and then start afresh when we arrive." Soon they were all back to the village, in the boat, and her bows turned in the direction of home.

Arrived there the meeting between Behring and Aungua and Domea was indeed a joyful one. Little had they thought to have seen the Tiger of Yumadong again on earth. As year after year had fled by he was often thought of and talked about. Neither did any think the stranger they had heard of in the morning was Behring. Perhaps he might be some one from Burmah, who could give them news; but when he proved to be the mountain chief himself, the joy and surprise of all was past description.

All were eager to hear from Behring the events of the past years, and at length an anxious group gathered in the large hall around the chief. This group consisted of Grasper with young Harry at his side, on the left of Behring. To his right sat Aungua and Domea, and behind them their two daughters with their husbands. Harding, too, was there, but slightly in the background. Behring spoke in the

Burman tongue, with which Grasper and Harding were now well acquainted. Except to themselves they never spoke in their own. Behring's weapons were all put aside, but around his neck hung his old well-remembered bugle, and as he talked his fingers often grasped it nervously.

He told them how he kept back the warriors in the pass after Grasper had left him, and of the visit he had from the enraged Burmese. "So far," he continued, "all went well. Now and then news came to us from Burmah, and in a few months after you left, I heard of the Maywoon Maulong being cruelly put to death by the tyrant, and also that the great Seredan of Shoodagon had been assassinated one night by the priest Koonah!"

Grasper looked at Aungua and Domea, and they looked at him with a sad surprise. "Sad work, lad! sad work!" uttered the captain. "Poor Seredan, I liked him for all his queerness; but, Behring, what became of that fellow Koonah?"

"He met the death he well merited," replied the Tiger Mask; "he was seized and crushed to death under the Sacred Elephant's foot."

"The Sacred Elephant," said Aungua, surprised. "What made the Boa use that animal?"

"I know not, Aungua," answered Behring, "unless because the Seredan was so loved; but never before, and I suppose never again, will the huge beast be used for any such purpose. I continued to live as the Tiger Mask, and my men rapidly increased in numbers and I in wealth. Scarcely a rich caravan passed our mountains but paid a good toll. Matters did not, however, long go smoothly. Whether the Boa suspected anything I never knew, but my village fell under his displeasure, and he issued his commands for a general hunt to be made on the Yumadong for the renowned Tiger. He repented the day, though. At that time I had over seven hundred followers, and when the boasting warriors swarmed up the mountains where I claimed to be king, my brave men cut them down like grass, and scattered them like sand. From that time the die was cast, and my banner openly unfurled. The tyrant saw in the Tiger of Yumadong a rival for the kingdom of Arracan, and often did he try to seize me, but as often failed. Time sped on; I was in no hurry to swoop down on the plains, but quietly increased my band. The small tribes of aboriginal mountaineers joined me, and I saw steadily growing in my mountains an army of bold men; but the day was

not yet come. Years passed ; years spent as usual, and occasionally with descents upon the plains, whereby I harassed the warriors garrisoned in Arracan.

“In spite of these successes I waited for more men. In my own mountaineers I had enough to keep the passes and defy armies, but not enough to command the plains. In my countrymen I knew I could confide, but it were folly to descend and trust to raising a rabble which would soon be scattered. Every man I wanted must be a tried man. I grew impatient with long delay. Could you believe men so love a tyrant’s yoke ? that men are so cowered that they fear to raise an arm to hurl it off their necks ? Alas ! I found it too true ; and when twenty long but active years sped by, I numbered little over three thousand followers on my mountains. You might think me timid in not carrying out my project with this band. Not so ! It was a brave band, but I knew the hearts of men enough to know that it was too small to carry out the plan with success. Thousands might join my arms after a first victory, but thousands of fickle hearts in whom I could not trust ; and I cared not if I waited fifty years, could I at last by one bold struggle end the work.

"To hasten over this story, I had spies all over Arracan, endeavouring to rouse the people to be in readiness, for I was anxious to be stirring. Fierce skirmishes we had with the warriors, and many of my men suffered much. The Boa, roused to madness, gathered a large force, and boldly attacked me on my mountains. He was met by us, and after a fierce contest made to return. At this time I received two heavy shocks. In the last struggle my brave Kala, to me as my right arm, was slain; and at the same time treachery was at work, and the 'Nest' revealed to the Burman troops. Take it, I knew they could not; but the secret being known, and feeling assured that the Boa would try again, I determined to make greater exertions to carry out my plans.

"Leaving Keintalee to command the forte, I took a few faithful followers, and made my way to Chittagong. There I knew were thousands of discontented Burmans who had fled from the tyrant's yoke, and sought the protection of the English garrisoned there. I knew also that there were many of my countrymen seeking a shelter in Chittagong. Thither I went. These events which I relate so rapidly took years to enact. Suffice it, I soon gained to my cause an army of many thousands, and with them I commenced my



march to Arracan. Once within its dominions, my bugle brought down my mountaineers. Keintalee guarded the passes, and with my own men, as the main prop of my army, I led them to the assault.

“Ah, my friends, my blood flowed freely, for Behring’s name rang through the land, and Behring’s banner waved over our towns and forts again. Success followed success, victory crowned every march, and the tyrant trembled, for Arracan was flitting from his grasp. But, alas! the tide turned. What I sometimes feared, now occurred. The Burmans in my army vacillated, and rapidly went over to the enemy. Treachery was creeping through my bands like a wily snake, and like dew before the sun I saw my army melt away. Every town I assaulted with fewer men, and an unlucky repulse heralded the loss of all. At once the people changed, and in a few short months I had only a small band of my own faithful followers left, and with them I retreated to the mountains. Keintalee was slain, and scarcely a hundred men answered my bugle call.

“Worse still, those who left me knew the secrets of my wild haunts; and still followed by my men, I was hunted from one place to another. My dream was dispelled; my hopes were blasted.

To build them up anew were folly, for by the time I could hope to raise a new band age would wither my strength, and the 'Tiger' grow too feeble to bite.

"Need I tell you how long I brooded over my dark fate? How often I wandered here and there, sometimes in the ruins of my village, sometimes in the caves of the 'Nest?' After a time I revived, and lived as I had lived before; but some wandering, roving feeling took possession of me. I remembered you, good friends, and determined to seek you out, if you were alive. For this purpose I left my followers, who settled down amongst the humble hill tribes; and bidding farewell to all the scenes dear to me, I journeyed alone and unrecognised until the captain met me to-day."

Behring ceased, and his face wore an air of sullen sadness, a spirit gloomy, but determined to bear up under the trial.

One after another spoke, and at length Behring said—"Before I left Arracan I heard it rumoured that the 'Tiger of Yumadong' was dead. It was to my purpose to let the rumour spread, and now all I have left is my mask, but even that is changed, and my weapons."

Behring now ceased, and fell into a meditative

mood, undisturbed by the others, who gradually left the room, until Aungua and Grasper only remained. Grasper, too, was deep in thought, but soon his thoughts ran into words.

"I tell you what it is, Behring, you've got a lesson to learn, and one I learnt too. It's a wholesome lesson, though."

"What may it be, good captain?" asked Behring, rousing from his musing.

"I'll tell ye to-morrow," answered Grasper; "we'll up by dawn and have a quiet yarn, but to-night turn in and have a rest."

"The captain says wisely," remarked Aungua, and turning the conversation he said—"Do you know, Behring, what became of old Monchaboo's wife? and what of my good old guardian, Luong?"

The chief thought for a few seconds before saying, "Of the wife I know nothing; but of Luong, I heard from one of the Chittagong men that, because he belonged to you, the tyrant ruthlessly attempted to slay his family, but Luong escaped with them to Chittagong, and died in grief."

"And his family, Behring, what of them?"

"I know not, Aungua."

"Poor Luong!" remarked Aungua, "poor Luong!"

and he remained silent for a time, then said—"Well, Behring, my true friend, here you must remain, and live with us, and share all we have."

"Ay, ay," broke in Grasper, "come to anchor here. I've turned Jack-of-all-trades well-nigh. Skipper of the boats, and sometimes hunter: that work will suit you, Behring."

"Yes, captain, it will. I love the wild free mountains. My spirit brooks not confinement; and, friends, you know me too well to be surprised if I'm away days together, hunting alone. From youth I have been trained to the dangers of forest and mountain, and though age is creeping on, I love them still."

Soon after this conversation, all in the dwelling were steeped in slumber.

Before the sun peeped above the east on the following morning, Grasper and Behring were out and standing at old Momien's grave. The smuggler might be seen pointing to the simple headstone with one hand as he spoke in earnest tones to Behring, who, with both hands clasped over the muzzle of his rifle, leant his head thereon, and listened with great eagerness.

"Yes, Behring," continued Grasper, "yes, that's the lesson I learnt, when my hopes were blasted as

I thought, and the old lass going on the rock left me ruined ; then I learnt a lesson to fix my affections on a better world." The old smuggler paused, and his eyes beamed with intense eagerness.

Behring answered not, but his head bent lower on the muzzle of his rifle.

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Years flew onwards. Changes came each passing year in the Soungari home. Night now mantles the scene ; clouds flit over the sky, but the bright moon, now and then bursting from their dark canopies, flooded the quiet scene with a rich radiance. Clouds and sunshine alternately decked the sky. Summer, bright and blooming, gave way before the hoary king of winter, and he, too, died again as spring was born, but, alas ! to fade again. And so the years passed—years of change, but of happiness withal ; for had not our friends found that " peace which passeth all understanding"—the peace of God given freely to all who ask in earnest for it at the hands of Jesus Christ ?

Leaving the village, from whence no sounds come, save the barks of watchful dogs, we wander to the nearest grove. There stands the venerable tree shadowing the humble graves, which are now enclosed by a stout fence. The graves are more in number

than when we last visited the silent spot. The clouds break, and in the moonlight our eyes wander over the solemn scene, and take in four headstones standing prominently before the aged tree. Three grassy graves are side by side, and one but newly made lying across their feet. On this last mound sits a man gazing mutely at the headstone, when the bright beams of the gentle moon fall over the spot. He is aged, bent down with years; snow-white hair falls straggling over his brown-skinned features. He is dressed as we have seen the hunters before, and a long rifle lies carelessly thrown on the thick grass.

A few paces from this aged hunter two others lean silently against the fence. The rays of the moon pour down on the headstone, and as the old man, raising his head, gazes before him, we read the name of "Domea" freshly carved thereon. The clouds cover the moon, and tears fall thick and fast from the hunter, whom we know now to be Aungua. Weeping with great bitterness, he fell at full length on the grave. Aungua remained motionless, and the younger of the two men, himself in the prime of life, spoke to his companion, saying—"I fear this is too much for my poor father, Harding. See how he takes on. Let us lead him away."

Harding, who still sturdy, had lost the buoyant, active look of former years, but whose hair and whiskers were mingled with grey, merely nodded, and moved slowly towards the new grave. He touched Aungua lightly, but he moved not; and Harding, attempting to raise him from the mound, suddenly started and exclaimed, "Master Harry, Master Harry!"

He said no more, and the son stooping, saw, with moistened eye and quivering lip, that Aungua, his father, was dead!

With a groan the hunter bowed his head, and at that moment the moon, gliding into a clear, unclouded expanse of sky, shone full upon the three graves side by side.

The left stone, simply carved, bore the name of "Behring," and nothing beyond. The centre one, almost covered with a creeping plant, had on it the simple name of "Momien," and immediately under it, in small characters, "God is love." No date, no age—nothing but this!

The moon sails over the clear space of heaven, and still lighting the solemn scene reveals to us the third grave, grass-covered, and with the headstone carved almost richly, and by a sailor's hand. He

who rests calmly beneath the green turf, had in life prepared that stone, and over it spent many hours.

Bright in the silvery rays we see carved a burning vessel wedged on a rock ; at the bottom of the stone an anchor, firmly embedded between rocks ; and betwixt the two rude carvings, in large, clear, rope-like letters, the gazer reads—

#### HARRY GRASPER.

“Keep yourselves from idols, or the Lord in wrath will break them down.”

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And Shoodagon, what of it ?

The venerable pile still stands, but time, in its change-working march, has wrought changes in it, and in the town nestling at its feet.

War, desolating war, rashly invited, has stalked through the land of Burmah. British bayonets have glanced in her jungles, and British vessels rode in her rivers. Time after time were Rangoon and Kemmendine razed to the ground, and again erected ; each time with new features, until now few remnants remind us of what they once were.

Desolation and ruin have stalked through the land. Monuments of a former grandeur and skill, unseen in modern works, meet the gazer at every



hand, and whole villages and towns, giant spectres of former wealth, are now tenanted by a few humble, wealthless natives.

Change, too, has bathed the noble pagoda of Shoodagon. For reasons unknown, the hall is blocked up; no entrance can be effected. Bricks have filled the passage leading into the once frequented temple, and the huge idol is removed outside in the temple-court. The nunneries, too, are abolished.

With all these changes the traveller will still see the rude houses, and hear the careless laugh of the people; their canoes still skim the rivers, and their wild music floats on the air, and the funeral pyre burns as bright as ever.

He will see, too, the priests, as usual, perambulating the streets for donations, and should he traverse the covered way leading to the great pagoda, he will there find the god-filled temples clustering round its base; there see worshippers bending before Guadama's image, and also notice the bricks blocking the narrow passage which once led within to the huge temple. There, too, will he hear the sweet bells high aloft tinkling merrily in the breeze.

Around the base of the heathen temple, grass-covered mounds and simple headstones meet the

gazer's eye, and thereon will be read the brief notices of many of Britain's sons, sleeping beneath the sod, swept down by the tide of war which once laved the very base of Shoodagon.

Voiceless, powerful, sacred monuments are they ; sending back to us a truth, even from the very grave ; a truth we should do well to take to heart ; that in our world, and in our hearts, many Shoodagons throw the shadow of idolatry over us to chill, and deaden, and steal the soul's love from God. They tell us that Shoodagon's shadow is but the portal of the tomb. And, glorious truth, one to pour hope and comfort into the hearts of those who are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, those silent graves, wherein Christians slumber so calmly, do they not teach that through this troubled world of idolatry, there wends a path of safety, by which the soul can soar to realms of unutterable light and joy, whilst the body crumbles amid the monuments of sin, even at the base of Shoodagon.

THE END.

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